

**Testimony before the
New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice
Chair Selvena Brooks-Powers**

**By
Stanley Richards, Commissioner
NYC Department of Correction**

March 24, 2026

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. I am Stanley Richards, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction (“Department” or “DOC”) and I am joined by several members of the Department’s leadership today. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department’s Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget and the work ahead of us to strengthen safety, stability, and accountability within our jail system.

I come before you today not only as Commissioner, but as someone who has spent decades working in and around this system—as an advocate, as a practitioner, as a partner, and now as its Commissioner. I take this responsibility seriously, and I approach it with both urgency and humility. I want to start with this simple truth: we have a lot of work ahead of us. As I stated when I was before this Council last month, transforming a system like ours is not like turning a speedboat; it is like turning a cruise ship. It is going to take time and sustained commitment. I am committed to that work, and I can say confidently that the team I’m building is committed to that

work as well. We share this Council's goal of creating a system that is safe for staff and people in our care, and holds people accountable, while also creating pathways for change and growth.

In this new role, my leadership philosophy is grounded in a simple idea: people first. The people of this agency and the people in our care ought to be seen, heard, supported and engaged. Our staff are charged with caring for people with significant mental health, addiction and other challenges every day. The people placed in our care are going through one of the most difficult times in their lives, and they deserve opportunity, as well as programs, services, and an environment that will help them transform and succeed. It is incumbent on this agency to ensure that our staff and the people in our care can go home to their people—to their communities—and be a resource to them.

Mission & Priorities

My mission as Commissioner is grounded in several core priorities. First, safe and humane jails. Safety must be the foundation of everything we do. Without safety, we cannot accomplish what we strive to achieve. Safety must extend to everyone in this system - our correction officers, our non-uniformed staff, and the people in our care. Second, strengthening partnerships. DOC cannot do this work alone. Real progress requires strong collaboration with all of our partners, including city agencies, community providers, labor organizations, and this Council. Real, sustainable change only happens when we work together. Third, supporting responsible population reduction and strengthening the continuum of care. DOC does not control who enters our care. But we are committed to working closely with our partners in the criminal legal system to support policies and practices that safely reduce the jail population, while also ensuring individuals are better prepared for when they return to their communities. Fourth, preparing the

Department for the future, including the borough-based jails and modernization of our operations.

These priorities are connected. When we support staff, we improve safety. When we improve safety, we can focus on rehabilitative programming. When we improve our ability to deliver programming and rehabilitation, we improve outcomes. And when outcomes improve, public safety improves. That is what putting people first looks like in practice, and what we hope to achieve in the coming fiscal year.

State of the Jails

Let me now speak candidly about where we are today. Our jail population has increased year-over-year for the past several years. In Fiscal Year 2026, the average daily population was approximately 7,100 people, representing nearly a 10 percent increase compared to Fiscal Year 2025., and a nearly 43 percent increase compared to Fiscal Year 2021. We are seeing facilities operating at approximately 92 percent capacity, the highest level seen in more than a decade. These numbers matter because they create additional operational pressure across housing, staffing, and service delivery every single day. I want to emphasize something important: DOC does not control who comes into care or how long they remain. But we are working closely with our partners across the criminal legal system to support responsible population reduction efforts. This is not just a DOC challenge, it is a system challenge, and system challenges require shared solutions.

At the same time population pressures are increasing, the Department continues to face significant staffing challenges. These issues are not unique to New York City; law enforcement agencies across the country, especially in the correctional field, are struggling with recruitment

and retention. Today, DOC employs approximately 5,600 uniformed members of service—a roughly a 20 percent net decline in average headcount since January 2022. And we know that additional retirements are coming. Over 800 uniformed staff are currently retirement eligible, another 235 will become newly eligible next calendar year, , and nearly 400 by the end of calendar year 2028. Those numbers tell a clear story. Despite what people may believe, DOC is not operating with excess staffing. We are managing an increasing population through growing staff attrition. To meet this challenge, we are making significant investments in recruitment. We are expanding outreach to engage future officers and running Academy classes to ensure that we are building a strong Department that will serve them throughout their career. But recruitment alone cannot fully offset years of attrition overnight. That is why retention matters just as much as recruitment. If we want to retain staff, we must support staff. That means investing in wellness, strengthening professional development, and improving morale. Being a correction officer is an incredibly demanding job—physically, mentally, and emotionally—and if we want safe jails, we must ensure that the people responsible for maintaining that safety are whole and healthy.

I also want to speak candidly about infrastructure challenges. The facilities on Rikers Island are aging, and many critical systems are operating beyond their intended lifespan. Infrastructure failures are not abstract risks; they are operational realities we must manage every day. The health of our infrastructure is inextricably linked to the health of our staff and the people in our care. At the end of the day this is not about buildings, it is about people. Putting people first means investing in safety. Staff must be able to work in safe conditions, and people in our care must be housed in safe and appropriate conditions until we can move to the borough-based

jails. We continue to make repairs, maintain systems, and address critical failures, but because our capital funding is largely tied to the borough-based jail program, we often must rely on expense funding to address urgent infrastructure needs. There is a real opportunity cost to that. When we use expense funding to address infrastructure needs, those are resources we cannot use for staffing support, programming expansion, or operational improvements. The first borough-based jail facility is not expected to reach substantial completion until 2029. That means we must have honest conversations about how we maintain safe conditions on Rikers Island in the years ahead.

Looking Ahead

While we are honest about challenges, we are also focused on progress. We are excited to continue expanding partnerships that bring additional programming and services into the jails. Importantly, these services were shaped by feedback from the people who will use them—the individuals in our care. That reflects our commitment to listening and improving how services are delivered. We are also focused on modernizing our technological infrastructure. Modernization of this agency's work is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Outdated systems have limited efficiency and coordination for far too long. There are several new technological initiatives on the horizon that will improve operations, communication, data use, and service delivery, and we are thrilled to be moving into the 21st century.

Critically, we continue moving forward with the borough-based jail transition. The Department has a team of dedicated public servants who have worked on this effort for years. Their work has positioned us to move into the next phase. Construction is underway at multiple sites, and planning and coordination of this city-wide project continues in partnership with all of

our sister agencies. This is one of the most significant operational transitions in not just the Department's history, but the city's history, and we are all committed to getting it right.

The Department's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget

Before I close, I will briefly turn to the fiscal year 2027 Preliminary Budget. For fiscal year 2027, the Department of Correction budget is \$1.4 billion. The vast majority of this—86 percent—is allocated for Personal Services, and 14 percent for Other than Personal Services. The fiscal year 2027 Preliminary Budget increased by \$58 million compared to the fiscal year 2026 budget of \$1.34 billion. Some of the increases to the Preliminary Budget include funding for:

- Expense components of capially approved technology projects, with \$3.2M allocated in fiscal 2026, \$3.5M in fiscal 2027, \$4.4M in fiscal 2028, \$3.4M in fiscal 2029, and \$2M in fiscal 2030.
- Laundry detergent, soap, and cleaning supplies for people in custody, with \$0.8 million baselined starting in fiscal 2026. The additional funding supports increasing needs for the Department resulting from an increase in population, as well as an increase in prices.
- Civilian base salary funding to close anticipated budgetary shortfall, with \$15M in fiscal 2026 only; and
- Uniformed and civilian overtime funding to close projected fiscal 2026 budgetary shortfall, with \$18M in civilian overtime and \$150M in uniformed overtime.

Capital Funding

The fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Capital Budget and Commitment Plan totals \$14.6 billion, which covers Fiscal Years 2026 through 2036. As of the FY26 Preliminary Budget, the majority of

capital funding is tied to the borough-based jails program which totals \$13.9 billion over the ten-year plan and is allocated as follows:

- Brooklyn Facility - \$2.3 billion
- Manhattan Facility - \$4.1 billion
- Bronx Facility - \$3.1 billion
- Queens Facility - \$4 billion

Headcount

We continue to work diligently to attract and retain both civilian and uniformed staff. The Department's total authorized headcount is: 8,811, which includes 7,060 uniformed positions and 1,751 civilian positions. Our actual uniformed staffing levels remain well below our authorized headcount and the Department plans to use funding for recruitment advertisement to be aggressive with advertising and marketing strategies to promote recruitment.

Conclusion

Let me close where I began. This work is about people. It is about the officer who deserves to work in a safe environment. It is about the person in our care who deserves dignity and opportunity. It is about the communities we all serve. This is long, hard work, and there are no quick fixes. But it is well worth the effort. Progress is possible when we stay focused, when we work together, and when we keep people at the center of what we do. When we put people first, safety, dignity, and humanity follow. Putting people first means investing in them.

People in my life put me first and invested in me, and it is what has brought me here before you today. I am grateful for this opportunity, and look forward to discussing the Department's budget, which is an investment the City makes in this agency and its mission. Thank

you for your partnership and your continued support, my colleagues and I are available to answer your questions.



Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.)
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Jasmine Georges-Yilla
Executive Director

Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Regarding the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027

March 24, 2026

*By Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director
New York City Board of Correction*

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the New York City Board of Correction (the "Board" or "BOC") regarding our Fiscal Year 2027 budget needs.

I am Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director of the Board. I am joined today by BOC's Deputy Executive Director of Administration, Tiana Betancourt, our Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel, Melissa Cintrón Hernández, BOC's Assistant Executive Director of Monitoring, Katrina Blackman, and our Assistant Executive Director of Research, Navena Chaitoo.

Background

As an independent oversight body established under Section 626 of the New York City Charter, the Board serves as a critical accountability mechanism for the City's jail system. The Board is mandated to establish, monitor, and enforce minimum standards governing the care, custody, and safety of people detained in New York City jails. Despite operating as a small agency with limited resources since its creation, the Board remains committed to fulfilling this significant responsibility.

To carry out its mandate, the Board monitors compliance with its Minimum Standards through regular facility visits and inspections, data and document review, public meetings and hearings, and engagement with affected stakeholders. The Board also conducts investigations and system-

wide reviews of critical issues—including deaths in custody—and publicly reports on jail conditions, compliance, and areas requiring corrective action. Over the past year, the Board has issued reports and recommendations regarding non-compliance with the Board’s overcrowding rules, access to counsel rules, and housing units and practices operating as restrictive housing without due process, among other issues. The Board also published two death reports, three Borough-Based Jails progress reports, a Monitoring Unit Quarterly report, an Assessment of the Department of Correction’s (“DOC”) Lock-in and Lock-out Procedures, and a report on Injury Response in NYC Jails.

With additional resources, the Board could significantly expand the scope and impact of this work. Inadequate resourcing of these core functions materially limits the Board’s ability to carry out its legally required role and weakens the City’s overall governance framework.

Current Resources

We thank the City Council for always investing in the Board as a key partner in the strategy to transform the City’s jail system. The Board’s FY27 budget is \$4 million, which supports 33 authorized positions and Other Than Personnel Services (“OTPS”). Over 60 percent of our \$329,000 OTPS budget goes to heat, light, and power for DCAS-managed facilities—costs beyond our control—covering both our headquarters at 2 Lafayette Street and our operational presence on Rikers Island.

We currently have 29 staff, with four vacancies impacting operations. Two Correctional Standards Review Specialist positions are expected to be filled by year-end. The Director of Research and Computer Aide positions remain unfilled due to underfunding and budget approval delays.

While recent hires—like the Director of Violence Prevention, EEO Officer, and Special Investigations Coordinator—strengthen oversight, staffing levels remain insufficient to ensure full compliance with Minimum Standards, especially as the jail population continues to exceed the capacity of Borough-Based jails. Additional resources are essential to keep pace with evolving operations and ongoing system changes.

FY27 January New Needs (\$2,787,755.80)

The Board seeks an additional \$2.8 million in its FY27 New Needs submission, increasing the Board’s overall budget to \$6.8 million. This request reflects the City’s current fiscal realities while ensuring the agency can fulfill its Charter-mandated oversight duties. The request focuses on three core areas: personnel, operational support, and modern technology infrastructure.

Since submitting this request, the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) has asked the Board to identify \$60,000 in savings for FY26 and \$100,000 in FY27 and the outyears, and to cut agency vacancies by 50 percent. Maintaining current staffing—and ideally expanding it—is essential. Any reduction in positions or funding would severely limit the Board’s ability to monitor jail conditions, respond promptly to incidents, and conduct critical research.

Personal Services Funding (\$450,538.00)

The Board seeks four positions and approximately \$450,000 for the baseline support of oversight operations, data infrastructure, and executive coordination. Specifically, the Board requests funding for a Deputy Executive Director of Oversight and Compliance to serve as lead project manager for our complex oversight work. This role would coordinate investigations, compliance reviews, monitoring, research, and reporting across teams and external partners, ensuring timely action. It would also develop tools to track compliance with Minimum Standards—a critical need as the City transitions to Borough-Based Jails. With the jail population at roughly 7,000, this position is essential to ensure oversight keeps pace with evolving facilities, policies, and practices.

Additionally, the Board requests (1) a Prison Rape Elimination Act (“PREA”) Project Director to restore PREA monitoring and address ongoing gaps in sexual abuse and harassment compliance; (2) an IT Systems Support Engineer to rebuild and maintain DOC-BOC data feeds, support modern data infrastructure, and ensure accurate reporting; and (3) a Special Assistant to the Executive Director/Secretary to the Board to support executive administrative tasks, governance operations, meeting preparation, and committee work. These roles are essential to maintain effective operations and accountability.

Other Than Personal Services Funding (\$2,337,217.80)

Operational and Accessibility Funding (\$190,000.00)

In addition to Personal Services (“PS”) funding, the Board requires baseline operational funding for legally mandated accessibility services, including Communication Access Realtime Translation (“CART”), to ensure that all meetings and hearings are accessible to staff. Also, the Board is required to hold regular public meetings, which entail ongoing costs for audiovisual support, lighting, and recording. These are fixed, legally required, and demand-driven expenses.

After covering these obligations, along with unavoidable utility costs, only \$37,000 remains for all other operations, including contractual services, supplies, and equipment. This amount is insufficient. It significantly constrains the Board’s ability to fulfill its Charter-mandated responsibilities and creates a risk of a budget deficit. Due to limited OTPS capacity, the agency has been forced to shift funding from PS to OTPS to meet these needs. This is not a sustainable approach.

To eliminate the need for these shifts, the Board is requesting \$90,000 for baseline accessibility funding and an additional \$100,000 in OTPS funding to support essential operations and address a growing workload driven by increased complaints and appeals, as well as the limitations of an outdated data management system.

Technology and Data Infrastructure (\$2,147,217.80)

A central component of the Board’s OTPS request is \$2.1 million to support continued investment in modern data infrastructure, particularly the Complaints and Appeals Management

System (“CAMS”). This system replaces the Board’s legacy Data Manager platform, which was built nearly two decades ago and is no longer supported or capable of meeting modern security, storage, or reporting requirements.

CAMS is essential for receiving, tracking, and analyzing complaints and appeals from people in custody, attorneys, advocates, and correctional staff. It enables the Board to coordinate investigations, identify patterns of concern, and produce the public reporting required under the Charter.

CAMS also restores the Board’s ability to integrate and analyze operational data from the Department of Correction, which is fundamental to effective oversight of violence, use of force, restrictive housing placements, access to care, grievances, and other key indicators of jail conditions. Without modern data infrastructure, the Board’s oversight work risks interruptions, delayed investigations, and reduced transparency, especially as we monitor a larger, more complex population.

As the City moves toward Borough-Based Jails, strong, coordinated oversight becomes even more critical. Facilities, operational policies, and practices will change, and the Board must have the capacity to track compliance with Minimum Standards and ensure that reforms translate into measurable improvements in safety, fairness, and transparency for the jail population.

Conclusion

Together, these PS and OTPS requests—totaling \$2.8 million—reflect a lean proposal that considers the required savings targets. The Board’s work is critical to ensuring transparency, accountability, and humane conditions in the City’s jails, yet our ability to meet this mandate is sharply limited by our current funding.

An overall budget of \$6.8 million would allow the Board to begin to expand its reach and provide effective oversight during a period of significant change in the jail system. Oversight is most meaningful if it drives results—turning monitoring, research, and investigations into timely findings, public reporting, and measurable improvements in compliance.

We look forward to working with the Council, the Administration, and the Remediation Manager to strengthen compliance with the Minimum Standards, support a safe transition away from Rikers Island, and reinforce transparency and public trust.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I welcome your questions.



**New York City Council Budget and Oversight
Hearing on The Preliminary Budget for
Fiscal Year 2027**

***COBA President Benny Boscio's Testimony Before the
NYC City Council Committee on Criminal Justice***

**Hon. Selvena Brooks-Powers
Chairwoman**

March 24, 2026

THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Brooks-Powers and members of this committee. My name is Benny Boscio Jr. I am the President of the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, the second-largest law enforcement union in the City of New York. Our members, as you know, provide care, custody, and control of approximately 6,800 inmates daily.

New York City Correction Officers are essential first responders. 85% of our members are Black and Hispanic and approximately 50% of our officers are female. In short, we are the most diverse uniformed force in the City of New York.

Our number one mission is to ensure the jails are safe for everyone, while ensuring the people in our custody receive all the services and programming they are entitled to and they are safely escorted to and from their medical appointments and their court appointments.

As far as programing is concerned, the Department literally provides dozens and dozens of programs to people in our custody and each of our facilities also provides their own programs that include, re-entry support to assist people in custody re-enter their communities, support for single mothers, support for LGBTQ individuals, mentoring programs for young people, programs to reduce recidivism, programs for veterans, programs that provide canine therapy to help inmates manage stress, anxiety and depression, faith based programs and programs to help people with alcohol and drug addictions.

These are just a few examples of the 20-30 programs provided to the thousands of people in our custody and not even one of these programs can operate without enough correction officers to provide safety and security, with most programs requiring anywhere between two to four correction officers at any given time and sometimes more.

And this does not include the many services we provide, which are consistent with the department's minimum standards. This also does not include unexpected incidents where inmates require security escorts to the hospital due to illness or injury. During these situations, correction officers are pulled away from housing areas to provide these security escorts.

While our members provide these essential services, we're dealing with the challenges of a very dangerous environment that comes with supervising a population where 70% of the people in custody are facing violent felony charges.

Last year there were over 660 assaults on Correction Officers, committed by people in our custody, including 25 sexual assaults on our female officers, over 170 spitting incidents, over 260 splashing incidents, over 150 slashing incidents, over 120 stabbing incidents and over 500 pieces of weapons and drugs recovered by our officers. In fact, we recover weapons and drugs in our facilities daily.

In the first three months of this year, we have already seen over 140 assaults on correction officers. In fact, within just this past week, a female correction officer was slashed just below her eye by an inmate.

In addition to these violent conditions, we are still suffering from a severe staffing crisis. Our workforce is down approximately 40% from 2020. We have approximately 5,000 officers working across three tours of duty, who are supervising housing areas where there is literally one officer to 50 inmates, many of whom are affiliated with a violent gang.

Safe staffing levels matter. Whether it is properly supervised housing areas, providing an emergency response team when violent incidents occur, preventing suicides, transporting inmates to and from the hospital or to and from their court appearances, supervising inmate visits and inmate programs, all roads to a safe and secure jail system begin with sufficient staffing levels.

COBA is currently lobbying our state legislators and Governor Hochul to restore our 20 Year Retirement Benefit, which would go a long way towards bolstering our staffing levels by incentivizing people to take this job and remain in this job. New York City Firefighters and Police Officers have all recently received this restoration to their pension benefits, but not us.

I respectfully ask this committee and your colleagues in the City Council to lend your support by writing or calling the Governor's Office and asking her to support

our collective mission to create safe staffing levels by including this legislation in the state budget.

The city's budget reflects the priorities of the mayor, yourselves, and your colleagues on the City Council. This committee must prioritize the safety and security of my members if you're truly serious about enhancing the safety of everyone in our jails. It's not the location of a jail that matters; it's the policies that operate a jail that matter.

It's outrageous that the city has allocated billions of dollars in the capital budget to fund new borough jails that are nowhere close to being completed, while ignoring the deteriorating conditions in our current jails. Investing in making much needed improvements in our current jails and providing funding for the new jails shouldn't have to be mutually exclusive.

These new investments in our current jails must include:

- Immediately updating and replacing all inoperable cell doors to keep officers and inmates safe from violent offenders. Many assaults take place because the people in our custody can pop in and out of their cells, just using an instrument as simple as a fork.
- Allocating significant funding for sanitary and modern showers and locker rooms for our officers, some of which are facing deplorable conditions, where rats and insects run rampant.

- Allocating funding for refresher classes in suicide prevention, fire prevention and training for Narcan to resuscitate people who overdose.

All these budgetary requests are long-overdue and go a long way towards making our jails safer.

We are prepared to work productively with each of you, DOC Commissioner Richards, the mayor, and the new Remediation Manager, if you are willing to listen to our concerns and take the necessary actions to improve the working conditions of my members, so that together, we can make our jails safer for everyone.

With that said, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

STATEMENT OF
SHARUN GOODWIN
COMMISSIONER
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION

BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE
FISCAL YEAR 2026 PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

March 24, 2026

OPENING

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers, Finance Chair Lee, and members of the Committee. I am Sharun Goodwin, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation.

I am joined today by First Deputy Commissioner Robert Eusebio, General Counsel Wayne McKenzie, Deputy Commissioner Joshua Young, Acting Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Operations Dr. Shamira Gambrell, Associate Commissioner Antonio Pullano, Chief Information Officer Razwan Mirza, and Director Paul Richards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Department's Executive Budget and our work to support public safety across New York City.

MISSION

At its core, probation believes people can change.

As I stated before, accountability remains central. But it must be paired with support and intervention. That is how we reduce reoffending and help people succeed.

Our responsibility is not just to monitor compliance. It is to reduce reoffending by changing behavior.

And I want to be clear at the outset: probation is one of the City's most important tools for preventing crime and avoiding the far greater costs of incarceration.

LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

Before I turn to the budget, I want to briefly speak to the direction we are setting at the Department.

My vision is to restore probation as a data-driven, evidence-based agency that supports staff, strengthens accountability, and expands meaningful services for the people we supervise.

Since stepping into this role, we have taken immediate steps to strengthen the culture of this agency and better align our work with our mission.

We have updated our uniform policy. Over the past few years, officers were required to wear uniforms. We are now shifting to a more flexible approach that allows for a professional, non-uniform presence to better engage with clients and the community.

We updated our firearm policy, so it is no longer a one-size-fits-all requirement.

We are restructuring the training academy to get officers into the field faster. The academy was approximately 5 ½ months and now will be 3 ½ months while maintaining all state requirements.

And we are actively rebuilding relationships with program providers to expand services for the people we supervise.

At the same time, I have focused on the people inside this agency.

Over these first few weeks, my focus has been on listening, learning, and engaging directly with staff to understand what they need to do this job effectively. We are advancing wellness efforts, strengthening communication, and creating a more supportive environment for our workforce.

Because if we expect better outcomes for our clients, we must support the people doing the work.

This is a shift in how we approach probation.

Accountability remains central. But it must be paired with support, intervention, and a real path forward. That is how we reduce reoffending. That is how people succeed. And that is how communities thrive.

BUDGET & POPULATION

Turning to the budget:

The Department operates with an overall budget of approximately 116 million dollars.

That investment supports a system supervising approximately 11,833 individuals across all five boroughs, including 10,681 adults and 1,152 young people.

The needs of this population are significant.

- 44 percent of adults are unemployed
- 12 percent have identified mental health needs
- 6 percent are experiencing homelessness
- 91 percent of youth are behind in school

These are not abstract numbers. These are the conditions that drive reoffending.

And they are the reason why supervision alone... is not enough.

If we want safer communities, we must address employment, housing, behavioral health, and education. That is why programming and partnerships are central to our strategy.

STAFFING

At the same time, we are operating within real constraints.

The number of probation clients has increased significantly, rising by roughly 5.5 percent over the last three years, while the number of available officers has declined.

That is the core operational challenge we are managing.

Today, the Department has 255 vacancies, including approximately 210 in the probation officer title, representing about a 23 percent vacancy rate.

Since fiscal year 2023, we have lost 405 probation officers and hired 235.

What that means, in simple terms, is that we are supervising more people with fewer officers available to do the work.

This is not because we are not hiring.

The recruitment environment for probation officers is increasingly competitive, with many law enforcement agencies offering higher compensation. This reality makes it more challenging to attract and retain qualified applicants.

The challenge is structural. The hiring pipeline takes time, while attrition has been moving faster than that pipeline can replace.

CASELOADS

That reality shows up in caseloads.

The average adult caseload is currently 54 cases per officer.

The average juvenile caseload is 25 per officer.

The ideal caseload depends on risk. Higher-risk cases should be around 20 to 25 per officer, moderate around 40, and lower-risk can be higher. The goal is to focus resources where they have the greatest impact.

Caseloads are not just an operational issue. They are directly tied to outcomes.

As caseloads increase, the quality of supervision can be affected. Officers have less time to engage with clients, connect them to services, monitor progress, and respond to needs in a timely way.

When that happens, the risk of reoffending increases.

From a budget perspective, that matters. Investing upfront in manageable caseloads helps prevent reoffending, which avoids significantly higher downstream costs to the City.

RISK-BASED SUPERVISION

That is why we are implementing a more focused, risk-based supervision model.

Approximately 43 percent of our clients are high risk, and that group is responsible for nearly 60 percent of rearrests.

At the same time, lower-risk individuals make up a large portion of the caseload but account for a much smaller share of reoffending.

We cannot treat those groups the same.

We are realigning resources so that officer time, attention, and programming are focused where they have the greatest impact.

DATA & EVALUATION

We are strengthening how we deliver and evaluate programs.

- First, ensuring individuals can access programs by removing barriers like transportation
- Second, driving consistent attendance and engagement
- Third, ensuring individuals are making progress while in the program
- And finally, tracking outcomes — including whether they secure employment and sustain those results over time

We are using this approach to better align resources to the programs that deliver the strongest results.

We are using data not just to track activity, but to ensure our work leads to real, sustained outcomes.

OUTCOMES

And we are seeing real results.

Approximately 75 percent of adults on probation complete probation. Approximately 92 percent of juveniles complete probation.

Adult rearrests declined, and adult violent felony rearrests declined more significantly, even as the population we serve increased.

That is important progress.

At the same time, we are clear about where we must improve.

Juvenile rearrests increased by 50 percent.

That is unacceptable.

And we are responding with urgency by expanding targeted interventions and focusing resources on the highest-risk youth.

OUR WORKFORCE

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the outstanding work happening on the ground.

We recently received feedback from a law enforcement partner who visited our Harlem NeON location and spoke very highly of two of our probation officers, P.O. Lee and P.O. Green.

She described them as exceptionally professional, respectful, and approachable. She noted that they offered meaningful guidance, connected individuals to vital resources, and consistently treated people with dignity and respect.

And she said she wanted to make sure their work did not go unnoticed.

That is the culture we are building.

And that is the work our officers are doing across this city every day.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are also continuing to rebuild and strengthen partnerships with providers, community organizations, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

Because probation does not do this work alone.

VALUE TO THE CITY

Finally, I want to make one broader point.

Probation delivers value that is not always fully visible in our budget lines.

When we stabilize individuals in the community, we are not just improving outcomes. We are preventing future system involvement and avoiding significantly higher costs to the City.

This Department plays a critical role in both public safety and fiscal responsibility.

CLOSING

Our focus moving forward is clear.

We are strengthening supervision.

We are supporting our workforce.

We are investing in what works.

And we are building a probation system that is more focused, more accountable, and a more effective one that helps people thrive, strengthens communities, and delivers real value for the City of New York.

Thank you. I welcome your questions.



**JUMAANE D.
WILLIAMS**

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND
FINANCE
MARCH 24, 2026**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Chairs Brooks-Powers and Lee, and the members of the committees for holding this important hearing.

We should start by stating the obvious: the future of Rikers Island, and exactly what role the city and the recently appointed remediation manager will play in its operation is uncertain. Further, it is clear that the city will not be able to close Rikers Island by its legally mandated closure date in 2027. Despite the urgent humanitarian crisis on Rikers Island, the Adams administration sat on its hands for most of its tenure, allowing the dysfunction in the jails to spiral and the death toll to rise. As of today, the population in New York City jails is 6,703 people.¹ This far exceeds the required population of a maximum of just over 4,000 people to transition to the proposed borough-based jails once they are constructed.

These proposed borough-based jails would allow people to remain closer to their communities, increasing incarcerated people's contact with loved ones and their attorneys, as well as giving them greater access to treatment and rehabilitative programming. I hear community concerns that the presence of a jail will increase crime in the surrounding neighborhood, but we already have other, smaller correctional facilities around our city, and there is no evidence that these facilities increase crime in the neighborhoods in which they are located. In fact, some residents have reported that they barely notice their presence.²

In order to lower the city's incarcerated population, we should be investing in pre-trial non-incarceral services and alternatives to incarceration, so fewer people enter Rikers Island in the first place. Court backlogs, slow processing of cases, and the recent disruption to transfers to upstate prison as a result of the wildcat strike earlier this year also contributes to the rising

¹ <https://nyc-jail-population-tracker.datacollaborativeforjustice.org/>

²

<https://citylimits.org/2018/07/17/the-jail-next-door-a-look-at-the-14-correctional-facilities-in-new-yorks-neighborhoods/>

population—detainees spent an average of 100 days in 2025,³ three times the national average.⁴ This fact is unacceptable. Across the city’s jails, around 85 percent of people are just waiting for their cases to conclude,⁵ and their sentences ultimately may require less jail time than what they served waiting for their cases to resolve.

Holding one person in jail on Rikers Island costs \$400,000 annually⁶—one of the most expensive jail systems in the country—yet the conditions in the jails remain abysmal. Being incarcerated takes a significant toll on a person’s physical and mental health, and many people on Rikers Island have complex health needs that require specialized care. There is a significant shortage of health staff, often with only one healthcare professional making rounds in multiple units. This harms not only the health of the people incarcerated, as the stress of trying to provide quality care to so many people with little support and inadequate pay is directly leading to staff burnout and turnover, as well as recruitment issues. Rikers Island is the largest mental health services provider in NYC, and one of the largest in the country. In February 2026, 60 percent of the Rikers population was enrolled in mental health services, with 23 percent diagnosed with a serious mental illness,⁷ and in January 2026, people incarcerated on Rikers missed 14,139 medical appointments.⁸ This is unacceptable; healthcare is a basic human right, and we have all seen what can happen when a person in DOC custody does not receive appropriate and timely medical attention.

In January 2024, the City Council voted to override former Mayor Eric Adams’s veto of then-Intro 549, now Local Law 42, which banned all forms of solitary confinement in New York City’s jails. However, Mayor Adams illegally issued an executive order blocking the implementation of the law despite ongoing reports of abusive isolation on Rikers Island—including punitively locking people with serious mental illness in their cells for weeks or months at a time, for no reason other than exhibiting symptoms of their diagnoses.⁹ Though the bill gave the Department of Correction six months to come up with a plan for implementation, the Adams administration did no preparation at all, and did not even plan to use resources they already had. In 2024, THE CITY reported that Rikers Island had “de-escalation units,” built in 2022, in nearly every facility that had barely been used and, at the time of the report, were almost totally empty.¹⁰ Following a violent incident, a detained person would be transferred to the de-escalation unit for a few hours, where they would receive counseling and monitored every 15 minutes by correctional staff—a protocol in fact aligned with the provisions in LL42, built before the law was even called for a vote. Instead, detainees were punished by being sent back to the intake area, where they could languish for days without a bed. This is, to borrow a phrase from Eric Adams's mentor, Donald Trump, indicative of the waste, fraud, and

³ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services-for-the-public/department-of-correction-doc/dashboard/>

⁴ <https://bjs.ojp.gov/web-report/jail-inmates-2023-statistical-tables>

⁵ <https://greaterjusticenyc.org/nycjail/>

⁶

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/67dd7c6d4e5dca1fa86db6d8/1742568562268/Independent+Rikers+Commission+Blueprint+to+Close+Rikers+Island+March+2025.pdf>

⁷

<https://hhinternet.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/2026/03/correctional-health-services-patient-profile-metrics-february-2026.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/Medical%20Non-Production%20January%202026.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/02/05/rikers-island-deadlocking-investigation-doi/>

¹⁰ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/08/07/rikers-de-escalation-state-of-emergency/>

abuse endemic to the DOC.

Eric Adams is no longer the mayor. Though he must work in tandem with the federal monitor and the incoming remediation manager, Mayor Mamdani is now at the helm of Rikers Island. Though he has indicated he intends to do the right thing and has issued an order directing the DOC to come up with a plan for the implementation of LL42, we cannot take our foot off the gas before we safely reach our destination. The mayor must also contend with the deep distrust Eric Adams has created with New Yorkers across all communities, but especially those who have suffered or lost loved ones in Rikers Island. Under the last administration, 48 people either in or just released from DOC custody died, and they should still be here.¹¹ Their families should still be whole. We must continue our work and our advocacy until no person has to see a loved one for the last time led away in handcuffs, or in a visiting room on Rikers Island.

We cannot meet this goal without robust oversight. The DOC has shown us repeatedly that it cannot be trusted to monitor itself. For years, the Adams administration defunded oversight bodies in the city, including the Board of Correction, a nine-person, non-judicial oversight board that carries out independent oversight and enacts regulations to support safer, fairer, smaller, and more humane NYC jails. As we emerge from the fog of the prior administration, it is more important than ever that the BOC has enough staff to do its job. There are almost 7,000 people in DOC custody, yet there are only 12 monitoring staff who conduct oversight in the jails, court pens, and hospital jail wards. It is unrealistic to expect 12 people to adequately oversee that many detainees, officers, and staff. Last year, the BOC requested an additional 20 staff members to begin effectively overseeing the thousands of officers and staff on Rikers Island.

It is more important than ever for us to hold tightly to each other. It is more dangerous than ever for immigrant New Yorkers, regardless of their documentation status, to make contact with the criminal legal system, making it even more urgent to focus on decarceration, alternatives to incarceration, and investments in our communities.

Thank you.

¹¹ <https://www.vera.org/news/nyc-jail-deaths>



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Statement of Luisa Taveras

Interim CEO, Women's Prison Association

Preliminary Budget Hearing, Committee on Criminal Justice

Good afternoon, my name is Luisa Taveras, and I am the interim CEO of the Women's Prison Association. Chair Brooks-Powers, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Founded by Quaker Abolitionists and prison reformers in 1845, WPA has spent over a century challenging the systemic inequalities that push women, especially Black and brown women, into the criminal legal system.

The population of women in New York City jails had been steadily declining prior to the Adams Administration.

Sadly, over the past 4 years the number of women detained on Rikers Island has more than doubled. This increase is concerning, especially given that there is clear evidence that community-based alternatives are more effective in preventing women from future contact with the criminal legal system and in promoting their long-term stability (Harding et al., 2017; Mueller-Smith and Schnepel, 2021; McCann, 2022).

New York City has not prioritized funding for organizations like WPA, which aim to safely reduce the population at the Rose M. Singer Center (Rosie's), the women's facility on Rikers Island, through community-based diversion and reentry supports.

Instead, the City has adopted a jail-first approach, exemplified by the Department of Corrections' plan to triple the number of beds at the new women's jail in Kew Gardens. This shift undermines the very community infrastructure that offers women safe and supportive pathways out of the criminal legal system.

A different approach is not only possible—it already exists. WPA meets women and gender-expansive people where they are, providing trauma-informed, gender-responsive supports before, during, and after incarceration—including comprehensive case management, trauma-informed clinical care, and stable housing—to help them reclaim stability and opportunity.

This year, we are asking the Administration for the restoration and expansion of funding for ATIs and Reentry services at MOCJ, a \$24.6 million increase from what is proposed. From the Council, the Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million increase in the Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs initiative across our 12 organizations.

In addition, WPA is requesting funding from the Speaker's Initiative to launch Mothers and Families Together, a diversion program for incarcerated mothers on Rikers Island. Finally,



WPA seeks Council funding for two key pillars of our stabilizing model: trauma-informed clinical care and supportive housing.

New York City does not need more jail beds for women; it needs more pathways home. **With the Council's leadership, we can invest in safety, stability, and family reunification instead of incarceration. We urge you to make that choice in this budget. Thank you.**

Summary of WPA FY27 Funding Requests:

Justice Involved Supportive Housing (\$500,000)

This funding will provide safe, stable housing for 30 formerly incarcerated women and their children, paired with holistic case management and mental health supports. Stable housing allows women to fully engage in services, reunite with their children, and build long-term independence. With 60% of WPA clients screened for transitional services lacking stable housing, this investment addresses a critical barrier to successful reentry and family stability.

Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (\$200,000)

These funds will expand intensive case management and trauma-informed clinical care for women both in jail and reentering their communities. Services include individual and group therapy, substance use treatment, and family-inclusive supports, directly addressing the high rates of trauma and mental health needs among justice-impacted women. Funding will increase access at Rikers Island and across the community, supporting long-term stability and wellbeing.

Speaker Initiative: Mothers & Families Together (MFT) Diversion Pilot (\$500,000)

The MFT pilot will identify mothers on Rikers Island eligible for diversion and connect them to community-based services, including family-centered housing. MFT will support family reunification, provide legal advocacy, supervised visitation, and individualized diversion plans. By keeping mothers with their children and providing comprehensive supports, this program disrupts the intergenerational impacts of incarceration while strengthening families and promoting public safety.

ATI and Reentry Coalition (\$2.4M increase across 12 programs)

This year, we are asking the Administration for the restoration and expansion of funding for ATIs and Reentry services at MOCJ, a \$24.6 million increase from what is proposed in the preliminary budget. From the NYC Council, the ATI and Reentry Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million increase in the Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs initiative across our 12 organizations.

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347 EAST 10TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10009 | 646-292-7710 | info@wpaonline.org

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Testimony of

Stephanie Bazell

Senior Policy Attorney

New York County Defender Services

Before the

Preliminary Budget Hearing - Criminal Justice

March 24, 2026

My name is Stephanie Bazell and I am Senior Policy Attorney at New York County Defender Services (NYCDS). NYCDS is an indigent defense office that every year represents tens of thousands of New Yorkers in Manhattan’s Criminal, Family, and Supreme Courts.

This Council is already well acquainted with the fiscal and human costs of Rikers Island. New York City now spends over half a million dollars per person per year to confine individuals in a facility so profoundly dysfunctional that it has become only the thirteenth jail in American history to be placed under federal receivership.¹ In 2025 alone, fifteen people died on Rikers.² These are not abstractions. They are a measure of institutional failure on a scale that demands an urgent and honest response.

The population at Rikers currently stands at approximately 6,684 people.³ To open the planned borough-based facilities, we need to reach roughly 4,160 beds.⁴ That number is not aspirational. We achieved it during the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated that with sufficient political will, a dramatic reduction in the jail population is possible. What is required now is the

¹ <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/big-moment-nycs-rikers-island-jail>

² <https://www.vera.org/news/nyc-jail-deaths>

³ <https://www.vera.org/ny-data-hub/jail>

⁴ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/03/20/rikers-population-tops-7000/>

sustained commitment to replicate those conditions through investment in alternatives rather than continued reliance on a carceral infrastructure that has proven incapable of reform.

The Mental Health Crisis Inside Rikers

One of the most urgent and underdiscussed dimensions of this crisis is the growing proportion of people on Rikers with serious mental health needs. According to a joint report by Katal and the Data Collaborative for Justice, sixty percent of the daily jail population required mental health treatment as of 2025, and twenty-two percent had a serious mental illness.⁵ Both figures represent significant increases over the period from 2020 to 2025.⁶ Rikers is not equipped to serve this population, and the evidence bears that out at every level.

Correctional Health Services lacks the staffing, resources, and clinical infrastructure to provide timely evaluations, adequate treatment, or consistent rounds. Even basic standards of medical care are not reliably met. Housing units that offer greater psychiatric oversight are plagued by operational failures, including a lack of escorts to CHS appointments, resulting in missed medical care.⁷

Most egregiously, a whistleblower has exposed the practice of "deadlocking," in which correctional officers deny people with serious mental illness access to showers, outdoor recreation, and medication for days or even weeks at a time.⁸ This is not a problem that can be reformed. It reflects a fundamental incompatibility between the therapeutic needs of people with serious mental illness and the punitive logic of a jail setting.

How We Got Here

There is no single explanation for why so many people with serious mental illness are cycling through our jails and prisons. Some of the roots of this crisis lie in the deinstitutionalization movement of the mid-twentieth century, which sought to close abusive and overcrowded psychiatric facilities. The premise was sound: people with mental illness would be better served by a robust network of community-based providers.

The government never built that network. What followed was a slow but predictable transfer of the mentally challenged population from hospitals to jails and prisons. When someone enters Rikers today, incarceration does not treat the underlying cause of their involvement with the criminal legal system. It worsens their mental health, increases their risk of recidivism, and

⁵ https://datacollaborativeforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Katal_DCJ_Report_.pdf

⁶ Id.

⁷

<https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2022/09/mental-health-care-rikers-new-yorks-largest-psychiatric-provider/377870/>

⁸ <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2024/10/11/rikers-detainees-whistleblower-mental-health-care->

inflicts trauma that follows them long after release. We are spending enormous sums of money to produce worse outcomes.

The Treatment Court Expansion Act

To interrupt this cycle, this Council should call on the State Legislature to pass the Treatment Court Expansion Act (S4547/A4869). This legislation would establish mental health courts in every county across New York State, operating in accordance with evidence-based best practices. For individuals whose criminal legal involvement has a direct nexus to their mental illness, these courts would provide a pathway to community-based care rather than incarceration. Treatment courts are not a novel concept. When properly resourced and implemented, they produce demonstrably better outcomes for participants, for public safety, and for the fiscal health of the systems that would otherwise absorb the cost of repeated incarceration.

The passage of that legislation, however, is only meaningful if there is a continuum of care to divert people into. Safe diversion requires robust community infrastructure. That is where this Council's investment decisions become critical.

Where the City Must Invest

The City must fundamentally reorient its spending away from carceral infrastructure and toward the public health, prevention, and treatment systems that will actually reduce the jail population and improve outcomes. The following programs represent high-priority, proven investments that are currently under-resourced or structurally incomplete.

The first is an outpatient competency restoration pilot. There is currently a severe backlog of individuals on Rikers who have been deemed unfit to stand trial and are awaiting transfer to a state hospital to be treated. Under CPL Article 730, a person charged with a crime cannot proceed in a criminal case unless they can demonstrate a basic understanding of the criminal legal process, and can assist in their own defense. CPL 730.10(1). Those charged with a felony who fail to meet this basic mental competency standard must be “restored to competency” by the Office of Mental Health, typically in a state forensic psychiatric hospital. Because there are not nearly enough OMH forensic hospital beds to accommodate all those in need, these individuals languish in jail for months while they await transfer for treatment. At any given time, NYCDS represents roughly ten clients who are incarcerated and awaiting placement at a forensic hospital, typically for 3 - 6 months.

Alternatively, the law allows people to be restored to competency in the community, in what is commonly referred to as “outpatient restoration.” CPL 730.50(1). Unfortunately this option is currently very rarely utilized in New York, in part because there is no established pathway to the intensive community-based services and linkages that are necessary for this population. Our city critically needs a clear route to restore individuals to competency in an integrated

community-based setting, rather than waiting indefinitely on Rikers Island for an OMH inpatient bed, of which there are far too few. The City Council should support the development of a formal, structured pilot that establishes this pathway, provides a framework for clinical assessment, and allows community restoration to become a viable, regularly-utilized option.

The second is Intensive Mobile Treatment. IMT teams were developed specifically to reach individuals with a high degree of transience and complex cross-system involvement, precisely the population that falls through the cracks of traditional service delivery.⁹ As of March 2025, at least 672 people are on the waitlist for IMT¹⁰. That figure almost certainly understates true unmet need, given how difficult it is for the most disconnected individuals to even access a waitlist. Funding must be expanded to meet existing demand and to extend outreach to those who have not yet engaged.

The third is Forensic Assertive Community Treatment. FACT teams provide a comprehensive suite of services, including supportive housing, benefits enrollment, and clinical care, while also accounting for the criminogenic risks and co-occurring needs that are common in this population.¹¹ As of March 2025, there is a combined waitlist of 682 people across all ACT teams, including forensic teams.¹² This is a program with a strong evidence base and demonstrated results. The waitlist alone makes the case for expanded investment.

The fourth is residential treatment capacity. There is currently only one residential program in New York City that specializes in treating people with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders.¹³ This is not a gap at the margins. It is a foundational gap in the continuum of care. Without residential placements, diversion from jail is not possible for a significant portion of the people who would otherwise benefit from it. The City must fund additional beds.

Finally, this Council must address its own unfulfilled mandate on crisis respite centers. Crisis respite centers are home-like, voluntary settings that provide an alternative to hospitalization during a mental health crisis. The evidence for their efficacy in reducing institutionalization is strong.¹⁴ Local Law 118-2023 required the establishment of four additional crisis respite centers in New York City. We do not yet have them. The law has been passed. The centers have not been

⁹ <https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/program/intensive-mobile-treatment-imt>

¹⁰ <https://www.cucs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Reaching-the-Unreachable-IMT-Whitepaper.pdf.pdf>

¹¹ <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep19-fact-br.pdf>

¹²

<https://council.nyc.gov/shahana-hanif/2025/03/24/nyc-council-press-officials-to-cut-wait-times-for-mobile-mental-health-teams/>

¹³ <https://council.nyc.gov/press/2025/05/22/2878/>

¹⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30071793/>

built. This Council should demand a timeline for compliance and ensure the funding is in place to meet it.

Conclusion

New York City cannot continue to pay over half a million dollars per person per year to produce recidivism, trauma, and death. The path forward requires a genuine reallocation of resources: away from a jail that has been placed under federal oversight and toward the treatment infrastructure that this population actually needs. Passing the Treatment Court Expansion Act is an essential step. So is fulfilling our existing legal obligations on crisis respite, closing the waitlists for IMT and FACT, building residential capacity, and creating a real pathway for community-based competency restoration. These are not radical ideas. They are what a functioning public health system looks like. This Council has the power to demand it and the responsibility to fund it.



TESTIMONY OF:

Michael Klinger, Jail Services Attorney

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 24, 2026

My name is Michael Klinger. I am a Jail Services Attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). We thank Chair Brooks-Powers and the Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to testify regarding the city's preliminary criminal justice budget.

For 30 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. After 29 years of serving Brooklyn, we expanded our criminal defense services to Queens. We represent over 40,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing the removal of their children, or at risk of deportation. Our staff consists of attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS also provides a wide range of services to address the causes and consequences of legal system involvement, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with the educational needs of our clients or their children, housing and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

In addition to zealous legal defense, we have built a practice around supporting people who are detained pretrial to mitigate the burdens and trauma created by confinement and to protect our clients from collateral consequences. Through our jail-based programming, we advocate for our clients to access services they are entitled to such as medical care and educational access. Additionally, our established presence in New York City jails allows us to monitor and document the conditions New Yorkers encounter when incarcerated and advocate for the basic human rights, health, and safety of our clients and other incarcerated people. Furthermore, many of the people that we serve live in heavily policed and highly surveilled communities.

PRIORITIES FOR CREATING LASTING AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE

In line with the Mamdani Administration's stated priority of prioritizing public health solutions over carceral solutions, and consistent with the Council's commitment to the implementation of Local Law 42, we see several important ways in which the Council can bring the Department of Correction's resources to bear on increasing community health and safety for all New Yorkers. These include:

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- decreasing the population,
- upholding city sanctuary policies by keeping federal civil immigration enforcement out of the jails,
- ending community surveillance through the unwarranted recording of phone calls,
- meaningfully improving the visiting process for family members and loved ones,
- providing high-quality programming opportunities to address critical needs and improve the likelihood of a successful return to the community,
- upholding the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people in custody,
- providing access to quality medical and mental health services for people in custody, and
- engaging thoughtfully in the planning and design of borough-based jails.

A. Decarcerate NYC Jails and Put an End to the Deaths of People in Rikers

In its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city proved that intergovernmental and interagency cooperation can be leveraged to reduce the jail population by the thousands in a period of weeks without jeopardizing public safety. The response included reducing new admissions by expanding supervised release and community-based monitoring programs, emergency release plans for people with medical vulnerabilities, compassionate release, and critical community resources for people in need of supportive housing.

Article 6-A

Under New York State’s Correction Law, the Department of Correction (“the Department” or DOC) commissioner has the authority to release sentenced people under a work release program.¹ Commissioner Richards has already indicated that he intends to use the powers granted to his office under Article 6-A, and we encourage the Council to support those efforts.² Importantly, the population eligible for release under Article 6-A is limited to people serving a sentence of less than one calendar year for a misdemeanor conviction. Given the relatively limited term of incarceration and the nature of the instant conviction (a misdemeanor), we further encourage the Council and Department to look closely at the recommendations of the Board of Correction regarding the use of 6-A, and specifically the recommendation to avoid relying on an incarcerated person’s criminal or institutional history as any meaningful part of its assessment.³

¹ See Article 6-A of the NY Correction Law.

² Commissioner Richards testified in today’s hearing that the Department is examining a structural approach to using Article 6-A. See also Elizabeth Glazer, “Stanley Richards on the Past, Present and Future of Rikers Island,” Vital City, Mar. 11, 2026. Available at <https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/stanley-richards-rikers-island-nyc-jails/>.

³ Board of Correction Committee Report, “Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Utilization of the NYC Department of Correction’s 6-A Work Release Program,” July 8, 2025, available at

Outposted Therapeutic Housing Units

In addition to reductions in jail population under Article 6-A, the Department must prioritize transferring people with high medical and mental health needs into safe and appropriate housing outside of the jails. As of this hearing date, 104 Outposted Therapeutic Housing Unit beds have been completed at Bellevue hospital but sit empty, apparently awaiting for the Department to staff the hospital units.⁴ We join with the Board of Correction in urging the Department to expedite the long-delayed and long-overdue opening of the Bellevue unit, and to expedite the opening of the two additional units at Woodhull and North Central Bronx hospitals.⁵

B. Abide by Sanctuary Policies in Communicating with Federal Civil Immigration Enforcement

The New York City Council has long led efforts to protect residents, including passing the 2014 detainer discretion laws that removed ICE from Rikers Island and barred city agencies from detaining non-citizens without a judicial warrant. These measures were meant to prevent transfers from local custody into immigration detention. However, despite these safeguards, many non-citizens in New York City still come into ICE custody after contact with the criminal legal system, a problem exacerbated by aggressive federal enforcement policies and expanded mandatory detention rules.

In 2023 testimony, the Department asserted that the 2014 laws allow it to notify federal authorities of a person's release based on certain "dangerousness" criteria without a judicial warrant,⁶ which effectively enables ICE to take custody of individuals directly upon release. But this interpretation conflicts with the original intent of the law, which was to ensure due process protections and prevent local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement absent judicial oversight.

To address these gaps, the Council has taken steps such as passing the Safer Sanctuary Act to clarify the law and reduce inconsistent interpretations. But additional measures are needed, including requiring a judicial warrant for any communication with ICE related to civil immigration enforcement, improving staff training to ensure compliance, and creating accountability

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/2025.07.08-6A-Work-Release-Review-Committee-Report.pdf> (recommending that the Department reduce its reliance on applicants' "performance in prior work release and probation or parole programs," "history of violent criminal behavior indicated by prior arrest charges or convictions for violence-related felonies," "institutional disciplinary record indicates a history of violent or escape-related activity," and "criminal history report indicating a pattern of bench warrants and/or probation or parole violations").

⁴ Jacob Kaye, "Days after commission issues plan to close Rikers, mayor charts his own path – with few details," *Queens Daily Eagle* (Mar. 21, 2025), available at <https://queenseagle.com/all/2025/3/21/days-after-commission-issues-plan-to-close-rikers-mayor-charts-his-own-path-with-few-details>; Reuven Blau, "\$241 Million Later, Brand-New Bellevue Hospital Jail Unit Sits Empty," *The City* (July 21, 2025), available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/07/21/241-million-bellevue-hospital-jail-rikers/>.

⁵ Board of Correction, "Borough-Based Jail Report," Jan. 2, 2026. Available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/BBJ-Report-January-2026-FINAL.pdf>.

⁶ New York City Council Hearing "Oversight - New York City's Detainer Laws," Committee on Immigration Jointly with the Committee on Criminal Justice, February 15, 2023, 10:00 AM, meeting video available at <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1078800&GUID=54D0B5D1-9B0B-4A5D-B7C3-F6E67806FBC5&Options=info|&Search=>.

mechanisms. Legislation like Intro 209, which establishes a private right of action, would allow individuals harmed by violations to seek enforcement and help ensure that the city fully upholds its commitment to protecting all New Yorkers.

C. End Community Surveillance and Related Sanctuary Violations by Ending Warrantless Recording of Phone Calls

The Department continues to contract Securus for phone services in the jails. Securus, in addition to providing these phone services, operates software that extracts voiceprints and other forms of biometric data, the content of the calls, and other personal data, and stores it in a Securus database. Crucially, the targets of this data collection are not only incarcerated people: any family member, friend, or community member called by a person in custody not only is subject to having their phone call recorded and listened to, but also has their unique voiceprint taken and data captured and stored, even when they are not under investigation or are a minor. Securus also integrates tools such as Securus Threads, which allows law enforcement across the country to use the information in Securus' databases to analyze the social networks of incarcerated people and generate maps of those networks inside jails and in our communities. People calling their loved ones in jail may have data from those calls shared with the NYPD or other law enforcement agencies, raising the risk that they will be surveilled based on their association with an incarcerated person.

There is an additional risk that, depending on which law enforcement agencies have access to Threads, every call placed by a person in custody in the city jails may generate shared information with civil immigration enforcement such that each phone call placed by a person in custody may unavoidably lead to a violation of New York City sanctuary laws.⁷

For these reasons, BDS supports The End Correctional Community Surveillance (“ECCoS”) Act (Intro 0096-2026 (Brewer)),⁸ which will prohibit the Department from recording voice communications or electronic communications, such as text messages and emails, made by or two people in the custody of the Department, except pursuant to a warrant or with the express consent of one party to such communication.

D. Address Challenges for Visiting Family Members and Loved Ones

The Council's Oversight & Investigations division reported this past year on challenges facing people seeking to visit loved ones on Rikers Island.⁹ The report included reviews of the in-person

⁷ Coordination between the Department of Correction and federal immigration enforcement authorities that may violate New York City sanctuary laws may be structurally embedded depending on whether Rikers Island remains a site for a so-called “Fusion Center.” The Department acknowledged the presence of a Fusion Center on Rikers Island in an official newsletter as recently as 2019, and then-Commissioner Brann referred to a Fusion Center in testimony before the City Council that same year.

⁸ Intro 0096-2026, *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7861501&GUID=B2D0700D-0F0E-4DFE-886D-FD09108BA91B&Options=Advanced&Search=>.

⁹ Committee Report, “Briefing Paper of the Governmental Affairs Division,” Dec. 10, 2025, *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.aspx?M=F&ID=15018577&GUID=BC41CE6A-48A1-4634-BC63-3B0BDA4F25CF>.

visiting process, the family televisit process, and attorney visits (in person and virtual). Among the issues observed by Council staff were the relative inaccessibility of Rikers Island for many families; the amount of time that the visiting process was taking for visiting family members; the conditions of waiting areas and lack of access to basic necessities like restrooms or drinking water; and a lack of reliable information for families that would help them to prepare for successful visits.¹⁰ The report also reviewed the process families use to schedule and conduct televisits, finding the process to be difficult, frustrating, and generally unreliable.¹¹

Following the publication of the Council’s report, as well as a related hearing and the further interest of the Board of Correction members and staff,¹² the Department recommitted to participating in a collaborative working group with family members, advocates, and attorneys to identify and address ongoing issues with the visiting process on Rikers Island.

The Department repeated its commitment to this collaboration with family members and advocates at various times since January 2026, including at today’s preliminary budget hearing. We urge the Council to request updates on this effort from the Department, with a particular focus on ways that the Council may support visitors.

E. Provide High-Quality Programming

This past February saw the return of outside programming to the facilities on Rikers Island.¹³ The Department is required by law to provide five hours of daily programming or education.¹⁴ After abruptly cancelling contracts with outside providers,¹⁵ officials admitted in 2024 that the Department struggled to provide the mandated programs.

We urge the Council to seek data, through reporting bills or otherwise, to better understand how the newly revived programs are functioning. Specifically, we hope the Council will obtain and publish information including: (1) the specific programs offered; (2) the frequency with which those programs are offered; (3) the degree to which instructors or providers are able to return to the same housing units in order to build relationships with people in custody; (4) the certifications

¹⁰ *Id.* at 6-7.

¹¹ *Id.* at 8.

¹² See Board of Correction, Meeting of January 13, 2026, available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/boc/meetings/20260113.page>.

¹³ See Jacob Kaye, “After controversial cuts, nonprofits to return to Rikers Island,” *Queens Daily Eagle* (Feb. 2, 2026), available at <https://queenseagle.com/all/2026/1/30/after-program-cuts-and-fallout-city-taps-nonprofits-to-resume-services-at-rikers>.

¹⁴ NYC Admin Code § 9-110, available at <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYCAadmin/0-0-5291>.

¹⁵ Jacob Kaye, “Jail programming suffers a year after DOC cut nonprofit contract,” *Queens Daily Eagle* (May 20, 2024), available at <https://queenseagle.com/all/2024/5/20/jail-programming-suffers-a-year-after-doc-cut-nonprofit-contract> (“When asked point blank by City Councilmember Sandy Nurse, who chairs the Committee on Criminal Justice, if the DOC was providing five hours of programming to detainees held in all facilities on Rikers Island as required by the Board of Correction’s minimum standards, DOC leadership didn’t mince words. ‘No,’ said DOC First Deputy Commissioner Francis Torres, who served as the deputy commissioner of the DOC’s Division of Programs and Community Partnerships when the nonprofit contracts were cut last year.”)

offered and the requirements to receive them; and (5) the criteria and methods used by the Department in assessing the programming, among other relevant details.

F. Uphold the Rights of Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary, and Intersex (TGNCNBI) People in Custody

In 2019, the City Council created the TGNCNBI Task Force following years of advocacy by and on behalf of TGNCNBI people in Department custody.¹⁶ In August 2022, the Task Force issued its First Report, identifying a critical need for a housing policy that would place people in units consistent with their gender identity.¹⁷

Since the Task Force's Report, the Council has considered legislation that would address this critical concern and require the Department to ensure that people in custody are placed in facilities consistent with their gender identity, and to follow particular procedures in evaluating all such requests.¹⁸

Although established by the Council, the Task Force faced an uncooperative and disengaged Department leadership under the prior mayoral administration. The Department, in addition to refusing to consider Task Force recommendations, also repeatedly failed to send informed representatives to meetings of the Task Force, failed to provide timely and relevant updates or data regarding housing placements of TGNCNBI people, and failed to facilitate touring of the Special Consideration Unit by Task Force members.

We urge the Council to take any necessary steps to ensure that the Administration and Department staff are fully engaged with and responsive to the Council's purposes in establishing the Task Force.

¹⁶ See Local Law 145 of 2019, *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3923931&GUID=94F7EE69-D9E4-45D2-8A98-A67C055EAE20&Options=ID|Text|&Search=145>.

¹⁷ See "First Report of the Task Force on Issues Faced by TGNCNBI People in Custody," *available at* <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/22136076-first-report-of-the-task-force-on-issues-faced-by-tgncnbi-people-in-custody-08152022/>, at 57-58 ("To ensure that TGNCNBI persons are able to gain the benefits of supportive and respectful housing, all requests for housing in [a Special Consideration Unit (SCU)] consistent with a person's gender identity should be granted, unless [the Department] demonstrates with overwhelming evidence, and in writing, a compelling security reason why SCU housing cannot be provided."). See also Reuven Blau and George Joseph, "City Jails Fail to Protect or Properly Identify Transgender People, Task Force Finds," *The City* (Aug. 15, 2022), *available at* <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/08/15/transgender-rikers-task-force-report/>.

¹⁸ Introduction 625-A-2024 (*available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6566059&GUID=F3FF271E-67D0-4367-B5B7-F2D293607F34&Options=Advanced&Search=>), and before that Introduction 728-2022 (*available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5858568&GUID=B0899179-A743-466B-899F-778AE43E0A8C&Options=ID|Text|&Search=728>) were each filed at the end of their session.

We additionally ask that the Council swiftly pass the current version of the prior bill, Intro 134 (Caban),¹⁹ which seeks to require the Department to treat people in custody consistently with city and state human rights laws, particularly with respect to gender identity.

G. Provide Access to Medical and Mental Health Services

Access to medical staff, daily or periodic medications, ongoing therapies, specialist appointments, hospital visits, and all manner of medical and mental health treatment are a consistent source of frustration for people in custody.²⁰ People represented by BDS routinely complain of a failure on the part of Department staff to produce them to medical appointments, including by failing to provide particular escorts as required under the Department’s own security assessments. In at least one instance, Correctional Health Services (CHS) was forced to discontinue certain treatments for a person represented by BDS after that person missed multiple scheduled hospital appointments for necessary diagnostic testing. The failure on the Department’s part was alleged to be related to the need for a “Captain escort.”

In multiple cases, people represented by BDS report difficulty reaching CHS through its “Health Triage Line,” or being added to any call-down list by speaking with correction officers in their housing unit.

We are aware of a forthcoming “dashboard” being established as a collaboration between CHS and the Department, and we urge the Council to request updates and reporting based on the information collected through any such dashboard or other efforts.

H. Planning for the Borough Facilities

Even after all three outposted therapeutic units discussed above are fully open and operating at capacity, they will hold only approximately 400 people, insufficient to fully account for the anticipated need for specialized medical and mental health treatment beds. Exacerbating this insufficiency, the previous administration, rather than meet this anticipated need, further undermined efforts to ensure that the Borough-Based Jails would include the originally approved number of secure treatment beds; the Adams administration reduced the number of therapeutic beds in the Brooklyn facility from 45% of beds to 22% of beds in order to increase the total capacity from the originally approved plan for 886 beds to an increased population of 1,040.²¹

¹⁹ Intro 134-2026, *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7861752&GUID=5E91F490-5BDF-4FC4-A361-8F34A5371E0B>.

²⁰ See Report of Executive Director, Board of Correction, at March 10, 2026, Meeting, *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/site/boc/meetings/20260310.page> (Reviewing February complaints received: “The most common issues raised involved medical health care, with 13% of the complaints”).

²¹ Anna Bradley-Smith, “City backtracks on key commitments for new 15-story, 1,040-bed Boerum Hill jail, locals say,” Brooklyn Paper (Oct. 19, 2023), *available at* <https://www.brooklynpaper.com/city-backtracks-boerum-hill-jail/#:~:text=Specifically%2C%20underground%20parking%20for%20the,in%20Downtown%20Brooklyn%20Wednesday%20night>; Jacob Kaye, “Brooklyn’s borough-based jail proposal expands by 150 beds,” Queens Daily Eagle (July 21, 2023), *available at* <https://queenseagle.com/all/2023/7/21/brooklyns-borough-based-jail-proposal-expands->

We therefore urge the Council and Administration to use every available tool to revisit plans for the Borough facilities and to maximize the percentage and number of secure treatment beds in each of the planned borough-based facilities.

Additional concerns related to the design of the forthcoming facilities include ensuring that the step-down units for people with serious mental illness are single tier to mitigate the risk of self-harm in double-tier units; making access to programming, education, counseling, and medical treatment a priority for every individual in custody; creating spaces for healing and growth including outdoor recreation spaces; and ensuring that the designs take into consideration the needs of women and TGNCNBI people in custody.

CONCLUSION

For all of these reasons, Brooklyn Defenders asks that the Council take all necessary measures to increase safety for all New Yorkers by diverting people from incarceration and requiring the city to take meaningful steps to decrease the population of the jails on Rikers Island, and to work closely with the Department to ensure that every effort is made to ensure the safety and dignity of the people in its custody.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at mklinger@bds.org.

[by-150-beds#:~:text=by%20150%20beds-.July%2021%2C%202023,diagnosed%20with%20a%20mental%20illness..](#)



Testimony of Elizabeth Lico
Public Policy Fellow
New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault
Before the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
March 23, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and the members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. I want to thank you for your time and for allowing me to testify before you today.

My name is Elizabeth Lico (she/her), and I am a Public Policy Fellow at the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault (the Alliance). The mission of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault is to prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes. Through public education, prevention programming, advocacy for survivors, and the pursuit of legal and policy changes, the Alliance works to disrupt systems and institutions that, unfortunately, can retraumatize survivors when they most need our support. The Alliance is a member of the Sexual Assault Initiative, a citywide coalition through which the City Council supports survivor services through trainings, programming, and advocacy. **Due to increased demand for services and training, the Sexual Assault Initiative is requesting an increase in its current funding from \$2.075 million to \$2.5 million.**

Sexual Assault Initiative (SAI)

The Sexual Assault Initiative (SAI) is comprised of five New York City-based sexual violence intervention programs: the Alliance, Crime Victims Treatment Center (CVTC), Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC), Mount Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI), and North Brooklyn Coalition Against Family Violence. Together, we served over 5,000 victims and survivors across all five boroughs in 2025.

SAI works to implement primary and secondary prevention efforts to make sexual violence less likely and to push for positive systemic change to ensure that support for victims is survivor-centered, holistic, and trauma-informed. Through these

efforts, SAI has offered more than 22,000 free counseling sessions and other survivor services, such as support for SAFE exams in hospitals and legal advocacy, nearly 77,000 times in 2025. SAI trained over 33,000 professionals to address sexual violence through prevention, trauma-informed crisis support in hospitals, in schools, and community-based organizations.

Sexual Violence impacts New Yorkers of all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, religions, ability, financial positions, and citizenship statuses, with marginalized communities disproportionately affected. The people we support are largely survivors of sexual violence, including rape and attempted rape, unwanted sexual contact, child sexual abuse, drug/alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, exposing, incest, non-consensual sharing of explicit images, sexual exploitation by a professional (e.g. clergy, medical personnel, massage therapists, psychotherapist, etc.), sex trafficking, stalking and cyber-based (online) forms of sexual violence. Our organizations have joined together as SAI to form a network of advocates, counselors, and other providers who serve survivors from all of these backgrounds. We support survivors to heal, both those suffering from the acute trauma caused by recent violence as well as survivors who are struggling to cope with violence they experienced in the past.

Despite this good work, demand for our services remains high and has increased over the past year, resulting in the need for additional resources to adequately support the survivor community. **Due to the increased demand for services and training, the Sexual Assault Initiative is requesting an enhancement of \$2.5 million.** With increased support, we will be positioned to:

- Continue to expand therapeutic offerings.
- Improve case management capacities.
- Enhance hospital-based services
- Increase the stipend amounts for Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFEs).
- Offer stipends to volunteers who assist in our after-hours support to Volunteer ED Advocates.
- Expand the capacity of rape crisis hotlines.
- Purchase updated examination equipment.
- Broaden the reach of our training into more communities.

- Support more hospitals to train and certify their personnel as SAFEs.
- Build out infrastructure within the city Department of Corrections facilities to provide incarcerated survivors with access to immediate support.

Sexual Assault Examiner Training Institute

The funding for the Sexual Assault Initiative supports the Alliance’s Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Training Institute (SAFETI), one of the largest NYS Department of Health-certified training programs for emergency department and medical professionals in the state. SAFETI trains doctors, nurses, and physician assistants to provide competent, compassionate, and prompt care to sexual assault survivors, and to conduct sexual assault forensic evidence collection and preservation.

Many don’t know that training in how to address the unique needs of sexual assault survivors is not part of standard training for medical professionals, with a majority leaving their medical education having never worked with survivors in any capacity. As a result, too often survivors will present in a medical setting seeking care, and those on staff will lack the knowledge of how to support them during this critical and traumatic time.

In a recent survey of New York City hospital emergency rooms, we found that:

- Of the 49 emergency rooms across the five boroughs, only 18 are SAFE-designated, meaning that they are certified by the New York State Department of Health to provide a higher level of care to survivors of sexual assault. And yet, even among these hospitals, we were not able to identify one that had adequate numbers of SAFE-trained staff to ensure that all survivors of sexual assault are seen by a trained SAFE examiner.
- The further you travel from Manhattan, the less likely a survivor is to be treated by a SAFE-trained medical professional.
- For pediatric survivors, very few trained SAFE examiners are available. Most exams of pediatric patients are being done by medical staff who haven't received specialized training.

SAFETI seeks to change that. Our SAFETI courses bring together a multidisciplinary team of experts to provide comprehensive training in injury identification, trauma-informed practices, evidence collection, and culturally competent care to child, adolescent, and adult survivors of sexual violence. Additionally, we offer ongoing

professional development for medical staff, including training on meeting the needs of special populations (e.g., the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities) and providing expert testimony in court proceedings.

SAFETI's work has been instrumental in advancing New York City's healthcare professionals' capacity to serve survivors. In 2025, 49 healthcare professionals completed the NYS-approved 40-hour Adult/Adolescent SAFETI course, including registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, Doctors of Medicine, and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine. SAFETI additionally approved the completion of 23 more healthcare professionals in their pediatric course. The 40-hour hybrid SAFETI course covered topics such as Near Fatal Strangulation Signs, Symptoms & Impacts, with a three-pronged emphasis on patient-centered lectures, the medical-forensic exam, and systems partners.

In addition to the 40-hour trainings, SAFETI held five additional seminars throughout the year:

- March: A review of the 2024 National SAFE Protocols, highlighting the updates from the 2013 to the 2024 National protocols, including patient-centered trauma-informed care, technological updates, and accommodations for special populations.
- June: "Providing Patient-Centered Trauma-Informed Care to LGBTQIA+ Patients," discussing best practices for providing inclusive SAFE care to LGBTQIA+ patients in the current landscape.
- September: A presentation on Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA), where Dr. Gail Cooper, Director of Forensic Toxicology at the NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, shared the toxicological investigations of DFSA, discussing current trends, proper sample collection, and common collection errors.
- October: The SAFE Mock Trial, a cross-training opportunity for SAFE examiners and assistant district attorneys to learn about the preparation of SAFEs and testifying in court using a combination of lecture, a presentation of a fact pattern, and demonstrations.
- December: A presentation on Near Fatal Strangulation Anoxic & Traumatic Brain Injury by Dr. Priyanka Datta, Director of Clinical Forensic Services, where she discussed the signs, symptoms, impacts of near fatal strangulation, how to assess for anoxic and traumatic brain injury, the mechanics of strangulation, and

best practice for testing and follow-up care to patients who experience this violence.

Our goal is to increase the SAFE capacity in New York hospitals to ensure that all survivors have equal access to the highest standards of care. Through the SAFETI program, the SAI provides essential education, comprehensive training, and trauma-informed practices to healthcare providers across the city to support survivors. Funding for the SAFETI program is imperative to supporting professionals who interact with and support survivors of sexual violence across the city and throughout the entire process of response.

Training for Human Service Professionals in Best Practices in Responding to Sexual Assault

The Alliance's General Training Program builds the capacity for anyone in NYC who interacts with survivors to respond in a trauma-informed way. Survivors do not always report harm immediately, and, in fact, the majority of their disclosures remain within their close circles, such as trusted family members, friends, and staff at community-based organizations. Once they do disclose, they interact with many people who, unfortunately, don't often receive comprehensive training on working with survivors.

Last year, the Alliance's General Training Program trained hundreds of people throughout New York City. We trained social workers at Lincoln Hospital, lawyers from firms across the city, several DA's Offices, and law students. We also trained staff at trusted community-based organizations such as Fountain House, which provides direct services for people with serious mental illnesses. In all of these spaces, staff reported hearing disclosures of sexual violence extremely often—our trainings equipped them with tools to have a support conversation with a survivor and direct them to free and confidential resources throughout the city.

In the next year, we already have training sessions planned with DA's offices and community-based organizations, and we're working with the Regional Emergency Medical Services Committee to offer continuing education credits to all EMTs and medics throughout New York City who participate in a training on supporting survivors when responding to 911 calls. This funding allows us to provide free, accessible, and tailored programming to New Yorkers who see survivors almost every

day and have expressed deep appreciation for the support and resources that the Alliance provides.

Furthermore, many of these community-level organizations are facing severe funding cuts, leading some rape crisis programs to close their doors and leaving communities without access to these mandatory and impactful resources. Investing in and supporting these trainings and resources ensures that they are available and accessible to all survivors in New York City.

Though many survivors engage with a hospital setting, others instead seek services and support through trusted community-based organizations, including those that provide culturally or linguistically specific services. To support these organizations, the SAI also funds the Alliance to provide training to staff of community-based organizations across New York City that wish to expand their ability to serve survivors. The goal is for survivors of sexual violence to be met with expert and compassionate care in whatever systems they encounter, with trainings tailored to meet the needs of specific organizations and the communities they serve.

OutSmartNYC

OutSmartNYC is a collaborative effort among the Alliance), the Crime Victim Treatment Center (CVTC), hospital partners, and nightlife workers that equips nightlife establishments—bars, clubs, restaurants, entertainment spaces—with tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence in their spaces. Nightlife is the heart of New York City, but it holds many risk factors that can lead to sexual violence. OutSmart trains staff in recognizing sexual violence in their spaces and intervening in accessible ways before the harm can escalate.

To meaningfully prevent sexual violence, we must focus on the context in which people become vulnerable and the locations in which they might encounter potential perpetrators. As a result, nightlife spaces are important targets for sexual violence prevention interventions. Nightlife is a meaningful part of community life for New Yorkers, and we know prevention works best when it reaches people where they live, work, and play. Nightlife locations are also strategic sites for sexual violence prevention efforts because they can host various risk factors in their settings (e.g., drug and alcohol use, overcrowding). According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately half

of all sexual assault cases involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrator, victim, or both.

While we know, respect, and often work with other organizations and individuals across New York City who focus on the nightlife space, our OutSmart model is unique for several reasons. OutSmart stands out by: 1) not charging for our services to reduce potential barriers for owners and managers to invite us in; 2) bringing our training and support to the establishments rather than expecting them to come to us, which allows our facilitators to better tailor training to the context; 3) facilitating a flexible curriculum with content developed for a diversity of cultural contexts rather than a one-size-fits-all standardized training model; and 4) explicitly focusing on sexual violence prevention instead of including it only as a component of a larger training.

Funding OutSmart will allow us to scale this program citywide, to shift the culture of nightlife, and make our city safer from sexual violence. This funding allows us to meet the growing need for training, eliminate financial barriers to impactful trainings, and offer support to nightlife venues across the city.

With City Council support, we will be able to increase our capacity to provide these critical trainings. Our expanded team will proactively push into underserved communities and take the time to persuade reluctant managers and owners of nightlife establishments to host OutSmart programming. OutSmart will also rapidly respond to high-profile cases of sexual violence in nightlife spaces by reaching out to affected establishments to offer technical assistance, training, and support with the goal of shifting the culture at problem venues.

In all, the City Council's funding and support for SAI ensure that survivors in New York have access to essential support for survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and accessible prevention and response efforts for public safety. This comprehensive programming addresses prevention and response through trauma-informed practices that address the unique harms caused by sexual violence. Funding SAI affirms the City Council's commitment to supporting survivors and sexual violence prevention by connecting New Yorkers to these accessible, all-inclusive services.

Thank you so much for your time today and for your dedication to continuing to fund these critical services.



Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. My name is Amanda McCarthy, and I am Senior Director and Youth Policy Lead at CASES. We served 12,000 New Yorkers last year with programs that support their personal goals for education, employment, housing, physical and emotional health and prevent the trauma of incarceration. CASES does what jails and prisons cannot: we restore hope by giving the city's most vulnerable residents opportunities to heal, grow, and succeed in their communities.

Too many futures are cut short by unnecessary incarceration. The City Council must ensure that this year's budget makes the necessary investment to close Rikers Island. At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. Unfortunately, key investments to promote well-being and reduce incarceration are missing from the Preliminary Budget.

This year, we are asking the Administration for the restoration and expansion of funding for ATIs and Reentry services at MOCJ, a \$24.6 million increase from what is proposed in the preliminary budget. From the NYC Council, the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million increase in the **Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs** initiative across our 12 organizations. CASES is proud to be a member of the ATI and Reentry Coalition, an ecosystem of providers that work holistically to provide public safety and community wellbeing.

The proposed \$4.6 million cut to Alternatives to Incarceration, and Reentry Programs, must be reversed, and funding must be increased by an additional \$20 million to meet the actual needs of our communities. We operate a range of alternative to incarceration (ATI) programs, which not only keep people out of incarceration, but transform lives, as people have the supports they need to avoid future criminal legal system involvement. In FY25, **almost 2,300 people were able to avoid incarceration** by participating in one of our ATIs. Our ATIs include:

- Nathaniel ACT, which serves people with serious mental illness and felony charges, by providing wraparound supports. The team-based approach includes psychiatry, medication, therapy, nursing, substance use care, housing placements, court intake and court coordination, ensuring that the full range of a client's needs are met. Among clients who successfully complete the program, *none are reconvicted of a violent felony, and less than 5% are reconvicted of any felony.* The program decreases homelessness by 70% and cuts psychiatric hospitalizations in half.
- NewSTART: a rapid intervention for people with a history of low-level convictions, designed to disrupt the cycle of incarceration. Starting at arraignment, newSTART rapidly engages clients in services and conducts an intensive assessment to identify client needs and connect clients to services including housing, mental health care, and employment support. A recent client shared the impact newSTART had: *"I am so surprised at myself. Today, I feel like staying clean. In fact, I want to help others with sobriety. Someone helped me stay clean, Now, I want to help others stay clean."*



- ROAR: Reframing Opportunity, Alternatives & Resilience, which provides young people with mentorship, employment support, connections to education, and direct access to mental health services at CASES. ROAR graduates are able to engage in voluntary services following successful completion of the program to ensure sustained support in the community. *More than half of ROAR participants start at a pre-plea status, so that we can begin to connect young people with resources as soon as possible.*
- Nathaniel Community Success, an ATI and ATD for people with mental health needs or co-occurring mental health and substance use needs. Clients receive a specialized clinical assessment to guide their treatment. *Over 80% of Brooklyn NCS clients successfully complete the program.*

These cuts come as DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, the focus must be on better deployment of resources, not hiring more staff. The FY27 budget should:

- Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to right-size the agency. This would save \$174 million annually;
- Reduce overtime spending by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center;
- Conduct a staffing analysis before the release of the Executive Budget, to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

Ensure Department of Probation Resources Community-Based Programs

With a new Commissioner in place, the Department of Probation has taken encouraging steps to return DOP to its mission of helping New Yorkers successfully exit probation and reduce interaction with the criminal legal system. Community providers are essential to this work, providing education, employment, mental health and other services to New Yorkers with probation mandates. It is critical that DOP have sufficient resources to ensure that contracts with community providers cover the costs and grow to meet the need, including:

- Restoring \$4.1 million for an intensive mental health and mentorship alternative to incarceration, similar to the IMPACT contract that was canceled
- Increasing funding for NeON Works to \$3.2 million.

Additionally, DOP should work closely with providers to rightsize other contracts where funding has not kept pace with increased need and costs.

Double Funding for the Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative - \$6.89 million

We encourage the Council to invest further into community-based programs for justice involved youth by doubling funding for the Council's Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative. Over 65% of children in the juvenile legal system have a diagnosable mental



health condition, and providers report long waitlists and unmet demand. Increasing support for the initiative would expand mental health services for **3,000 young people served by 21 providers**.

CASES utilizes City funding to support its Adolescent Portable Therapy (APT) program, providing cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and in-house family therapy that helps young people heal and thrive. With increased funding, CASES would add a clinical director to oversee all youth mental health services, ensuring high quality care for hundreds of young people. Doubling the Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative is a critical component to improve the emotional wellbeing of our young people.

ACES: \$10.1 Million

ACES makes real connections with young men that are -difficult to engage, those disconnected from school, community, and employment opportunities. Through building trust and persistent outreach, staff connect with young people that often do not have other support systems, to meet their immediate material needs and begin building the essential life skills to thrive and avoid the criminal legal system. With this strong foundation, participants overcome their personal barriers, take on life's challenges, and achieve their goals. They participate in paid transitional employment services, pursue high school equivalency courses, and engage in work readiness. **86% of all ACES participants successfully avoided arrest while in the program.**

ACS has proposed expanding ACES to serve more young people in the Bronx, Central Harlem, and Brooklyn, with \$10.1 million in funding. Current funding does not meet demand, and more young people are becoming caught up in the criminal legal system and detained in juvenile justice facilities. Young people are spending more days in detention, as the population of our juvenile justice facilities rises.

\$13 million to Eliminate ACT & IMT Waitlists

CASES is one of the largest providers of mobile behavioral health services in New York City. Our 9 Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and 7 Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) programs are particularly effective for those cycling through the mental health, criminal justice, and homeless service systems with unsafe and escalating behaviors resistant to traditional treatment models. With intensive holistic support, our clients break cycles of hospitalization and arrest to live independently and successfully in the community.

Though \$11 million was added in last year's budget, today's waitlists for ACT and IMT services stand at 682 and 672 people in need of services, respectively. We encourage the City Council to fully fund these transformative models and end the waitlist by supporting the \$11 million and \$2 million investments into IMT and Forensic ACT (FACT).



Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the essential mental health programs that are needed in our community.

Amanda McCarthy
Senior Director and Youth Policy Lead
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The **Center for Justice Innovation** is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

- 2. Harlem Community Justice Center
- 3. Headquarters
- 4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
- 5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

- 6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

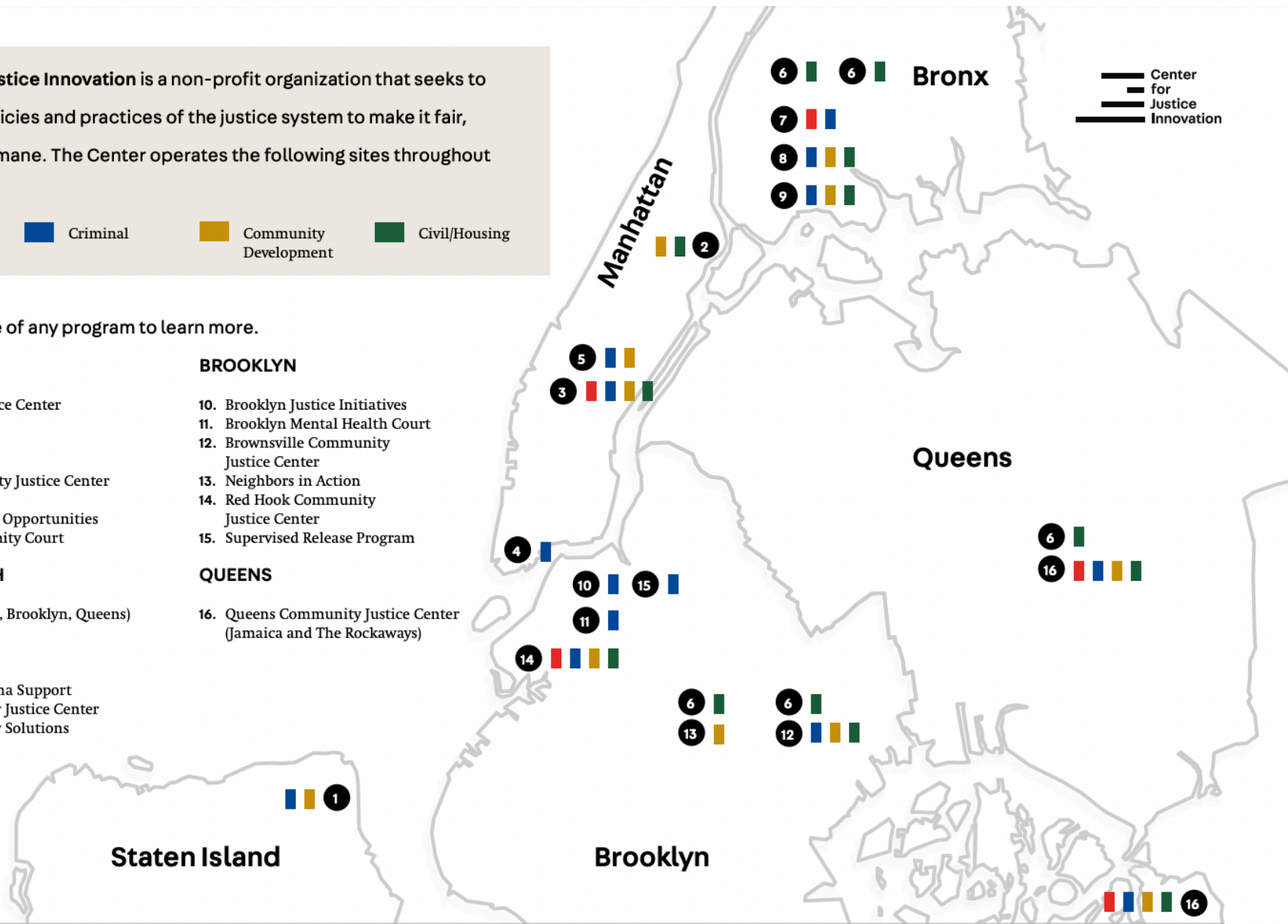
- 7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
- 8. Bronx Community Justice Center
- 9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

- 10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
- 11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
- 12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
- 13. Neighbors in Action
- 14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- 15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

- 16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)



Center for Justice Innovation

Citywide

- Access to Justice
- Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
- RISE Project
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Parent Support Program
- Strong Starts Court Initiative
- Driver Accountability Program
- Project Reset
- Youth Action Institute
- Gender and Family Justice
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Youth Impact

For More Information

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**Center for Justice Innovation
New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice
March 24, 2026**

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and esteemed members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. My name is Magaly Melendez, and I serve as the Deputy Project Director for Bronx Community Solutions, an initiative of the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

New York City is at a pivotal moment in its criminal justice system transformation. The mandated closure of Rikers Island represents not only a legal obligation, but a commitment to building a smaller, safer, and more effective system—one that relies less on incarceration and more on prevention, diversion, and community-based solutions. Achieving this vision will require sustained investment in the programs that reduce system involvement at every stage and support people safely in the community. At the same time, the City faces significant fiscal pressures, making it essential to prioritize approaches that both strengthen public safety and use limited resources effectively.

The initiatives highlighted today reflect a comprehensive approach to meeting this moment. Spanning community-based prevention, violence interruption, diversion, and alternatives to incarceration, these programs address the underlying drivers of justice system involvement while creating meaningful pathways away from jail. Together, they demonstrate how targeted investments can reduce reliance on incarceration, strengthen public safety, and support more stable outcomes for individuals and communities.

Alternatives to Incarceration

Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration

The Center for Justice Innovation’s Brooklyn Felony Alternative-to-Incarceration programs provide community-based sentencing options for individuals facing felony charges, offering an alternative to incarceration while promoting public safety and rehabilitation. These programs—including Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) and non-specialized felony ATI services—address underlying issues such as mental illness, substance use, housing instability, and unemployment through individualized treatment, supervision, and case management.

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) seeks to craft meaningful responses specifically for defendants with serious

mental illness (such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder), who are facing felony charges and would otherwise be jail- or prison-bound. In the years since, BMHC has served as a model for jurisdictions across the city, state, and country in its successful approach to addressing both treatment needs and the public safety concerns of the community. Program success has been well documented, producing results such as: a 73 percent compliance rate, along with a statistically significant reduction in re-arrests for active participants; and a 17 percent reduction in likelihood of reconviction versus a comparison group.¹ Through 2025, over 1,500 participants have received treatment, satisfied program requirements, and graduated, all while avoiding the harms of incarceration.² Additionally, referrals have doubled over the past 10 years. This growing demand reflects the broader realities of mental health needs in Brooklyn’s communities and jails.

The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of BMHC provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of cases the program serves. Since 2017, nearly 200 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court.³ Thanks to City Council support, Brooklyn Mental Health Court hired a dedicated Youth Engagement Social Worker to lead youth programming and foster close relationships with participants. Renewed funding will enable Brooklyn Mental Health Court to continue and strengthen youth-focused programs, provide participants with meaningful activities, supply healthy meals and snacks to participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain the position of Youth Engagement Social Worker.

Non-Specialized Felony ATI

In addition to the services provided by Brooklyn Mental Health Court, which are specialized for individuals with serious mental illness, the Center’s Brooklyn Felony ATI programming also offers community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring for felony cases that are ineligible for drug, mental health, and domestic violence courts. This initiative builds upon the long-standing success of BMHC, using a similar model but targeting participants who do not require the specific services of mental health court or other specialized courts. The program is based in various court parts within Brooklyn Supreme Court, working with different judges and supervising prosecutors who can ensure coordination in policies and practices. The goal of the program is to significantly increase the use of ATIs, supports, and supervision offered to individuals charged with felonies.

Due to growing demand and increasingly complex participant needs, the Center is seeking renewed and enhanced City Council funding. Additional funding would support program operations, data evaluation, and two new positions:

- A Housing Case Manager to address housing instability—a key barrier to treatment engagement and successful reentry.
- A Peer Mental Health Specialist to provide mentorship and hands-on support, improving engagement and compliance.

¹ Rossman, S.B., J. Buck Willison, K. Mallik Kane, K. Kim, S. Debus-Sherrill & P.M. Downey (2012, July). Criminal Justice Interventions for Offenders with Mental Illness: Evaluation of Mental Health Courts in Bronx and Brooklyn, New York. New York, NY: Urban Institute.
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/25576/412603-Criminal-Justice-Interventions-for-Offenders-With-Mental-Illness-Evaluation-of-Mental-Health-Courts-in-Bronx-and-Brooklyn-New-York.PDF>

² Center for Justice Innovation. (2026). Brooklyn Mental Health Court Database. [Data file].

³ Ibid.

EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice

EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice is a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants. The goal of the ATI programs is to offer a single point of access to a wide array of community-based services as alternative sentencing options in criminal cases, thereby reducing incarceration and improving public safety by addressing the underlying issues that lead to justice system involvement. At the Center’s Staten Island Justice Center and the Queens Community Justice Center, there has been an increase in the number of female participants (including female-identifying participants) referred to ATI programming, a trend that is reflected nationwide. Research shows that women who come into contact with the justice system often have unique needs and experiences that differ significantly from those of men, meanwhile there are few organizations in New York City that offer gender-specific ATI programs for women.⁴ Some of the unique needs of justice system-involved women include:

1. **Higher Rates of Abuse and Trauma:** Women involved in the justice system are more likely to have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse compared to their male counterparts⁵
2. **Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders:** Women involved in the justice system tend to report higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse⁶
3. **Economic Challenges:** Women involved in the justice system may face greater challenges securing stable, well-paying jobs upon release, impacting their ability to provide for themselves and their families⁷
4. **Parental Responsibilities:** A large portion of women involved in the justice system are mothers and often the primary caretakers for their children⁸

Internal data collected from female participants at the Staten Island Justice Center and the Queens Community Justice Center support these findings. With support from City Council funding, both Justice Centers will launch EmpowerHer: Pathways to Justice, which will provide both group and individual programming to address the needs of female participants. Funding will be used to hire a case manager for each site, who will deliver trauma-informed and gender-specific programming that address the intersections of trauma, race, gender, and sexuality for women involved in the justice system. Psychoeducational groups will aim to address the most pressing needs of women in the justice system, in tandem with individual case management services. The program’s primary focus will be on addressing economic development, health, mental health, and parental support needs.

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice. (2020, August 13). *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Women’s Justice: A Preliminary Assessment of Women in the Criminal Justice System*. Council on Criminal Justice. (2024, July).

<https://counciloncj.org/womens-justice-a-preliminary-assessment-of-women-in-the-criminal-justice-system>

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice. (2020, August 13). *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

⁸ *Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform*. Vera Institute of Justice. (2016, August). <https://www.vera.org/publications/overlooked-women-and-jails-report>

Diversion & Early Intervention

Bronx Project Reset

The Center for Justice Innovation’s Bronx Project Reset is a restorative, voluntary, pre-arraignment diversion program that provides individuals arrested for eligible misdemeanors the opportunity to resolve their case through community-based programming rather than appearing in court. Individuals who successfully complete Reset programming do not receive a criminal record, have the record of their arrest erased, and avoid the significant collateral consequences of court involvement. The Center is requesting renewed City Council funding to continue expanding diversion services for adults in the Bronx through the Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) site.

The program is guided by restorative justice—a justice paradigm which prioritizes the goals of connection and healing in place of punishment and isolation. Project Reset Bronx circles are designed to bring together participants who have experienced a low-level arrest and are often joined by trained volunteers from the Bronx community. During a circle, participants have an opportunity to discuss their arrest experience among peers, examine the underlying issues that may have contributed to the arrest, and develop a sense of connection and responsibility to their community with the support of trained community volunteers.

By diverting participants out of the criminal legal system for these low-level charges, Project Reset helps participants avoid future justice system involvement and the cascading impact of a criminal record. Since its launch, Project Reset Bronx has helped over 2,100 individuals avoid the collateral consequences of a criminal record, saving time and resources that would otherwise be spent in the traditional court process.⁹

The Center also operates same-day Reset, known as Rapid Reset the Bronx. A goal of this initiative is to serve individuals who would have already been eligible for Project Reset, but for a variety of reasons were not able to be contacted prior to their arraignment date. This may be due to inaccurate or missing contact information on their arrest paperwork. Participants might also have inconsistent access to phones or email, and may have no reliable method of receiving mail, making it difficult or impossible for Reset program staff to reach them and engage them in services. For years, these individuals missed out on the benefits of Project Reset. Now, with the availability of Rapid Reset, these individuals have the opportunity to engage in Project Reset programming at arraignment. Upon successful completion of the session, participants’ cases are dismissed the same day and they are not required to return to court.

Driver Accountability Program

The Center for Justice Innovation’s Driver Accountability Program (DAP) improves street safety by changing driver behavior through reflection, introspection and accountability rather than relying on punitive responses such as fines, prosecution, or short-term incarceration. Operating at seven sites across all five boroughs, the program serves individuals charged with vehicular offenses by helping them reflect on harmful driving behaviors, understand the impact of traffic violence, and commit to safer practices. In 2025, more than 1,200 participants completed the program citywide.¹⁰

⁹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2026). Reset database. [Data file].

¹⁰ Center for Justice Innovation. (2026). Justice Center Application database. [Data file].

DAP uses facilitated group sessions that encourage self-reflection, education on traffic safety, and accountability, including exposure to victims' perspectives. Evaluations show strong outcomes, including a 50 percent reduction in recidivism in Brooklyn and improved case outcomes compared to traditional legal responses.¹¹ The Center also operates Circles for Safe Streets, an intensive restorative justice initiative for crashes involving serious injury or death. This program brings together drivers and victims or surviving family members in facilitated dialogues focused on accountability, healing, and repair, filling a critical gap in the justice system's response to serious traffic harm.

City Council funding will sustain existing operations by support staffing, restorative justice facilitation, victim services, translation services, research, and program evaluation. Enhanced funding would also allow expansion in response to emerging needs, including:

- operations at the Midtown Community Justice Center,
- a new curriculum addressing documentation-related driving offenses,
- pre-arraignment diversion programming in Staten Island, and
- increased capacity and language access for Circles for Safe Streets..

Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated Treatment Initiative

Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, DWI treatment, and enrollment in the Driver Accountability Program. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers of DWI treatment regularly charge \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 in order to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that still remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible.

Bronx Community Solutions is seeking funding from City Council to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI treatment coordinator so that BCS may continue to be relied on by the courts to do the necessary work of rapidly connecting mandated participants to treatment, resulting in safer streets for all New Yorkers. Over the last three years, BCS has assisted an annual average of 176 participants in the completion of their mandated DWI treatment. Since 2020, among the participants referred and followed by BCS through their treatment process, over 94% successfully completed treatment.¹² Currently, as an unfunded initiative, BCS utilizes the time of several members of the organization's intake and compliance departments to complete this work. The DWI Treatment Initiative will allow for the dedicated, full-time work of one treatment coordinator. If funded, this DWI treatment coordinator will be a bilingual Spanish and English speaker to best serve the community's demonstrated needs.

Strong Starts Court Initiative

¹¹ Strong, H., Reynolds, D., & Sharlein, J. (2024, November 3). Steering Towards Safety: An Impact Evaluation of the Driver Accountability Program.

https://www.innovatingjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/DAP-eval_11072024.pdf

¹² Center for Justice Innovation. (2026). Justice Center Application database. [Data file].

The Strong Starts Court Initiative is a Family Court-based program that provides specialized, two-generational support to infants, toddlers, and their families involved in child protection proceedings. Serving children from birth to age three—the most critical period of early development—the initiative works with families whose cases are before the New York City Family Court following allegations of abuse or neglect filed by the Administration for Children’s Services.

Strong Starts addresses a significant gap within the child welfare system by integrating expertise in infant development and infant mental health directly into court processes. Through comprehensive clinical assessments, ongoing consultation, and coordinated service planning, the program helps judges, attorneys, and caseworkers make developmentally informed decisions that promote safe parenting, strengthen caregiver-child relationships, and reduce harmful disruptions such as placement instability or prolonged separation.

First piloted in the Bronx in 2015 and now operating across all five boroughs and additional counties, Strong Starts connects families to high-quality, targeted services while fostering collaboration among courts, child welfare agencies, and providers. Evaluations of the program have demonstrated an increased rate of family preservation, greater efficiency in case resolution, enhanced family well-being, and a reduced likelihood of future abuse or neglect petitions.¹³ In addition, Strong Starts strengthens systemwide practice by training legal professionals in early childhood development, extending its impact beyond participating families. City Council funding will allow the Strong Starts Court Initiative to reach more families, strengthen early intervention, and improve outcomes for some of the City’s most vulnerable children during a critical period of development.

Community Justice Centers

The Center runs Community Justice Centers in all five boroughs of New York City. A Community Justice Center is a place-based partnership that brings courts and community safety strategies closer to the neighborhoods they serve, integrating accountability with services and prevention. These centers address the underlying drivers of justice system involvement, such as substance use, poverty, housing instability, and mental health challenges. This is done while fostering collaboration among residents, service providers, and justice system stakeholders to strengthen communities and expand opportunity. In the upcoming fiscal year, the Center is requesting funding to support the following initiatives across our Justice Centers.

Bronx Community Justice Center

The Bronx Community Justice Center serves the South Bronx as a hub for public safety, youth opportunity, and neighborhood investment, advancing a comprehensive approach that includes violence prevention, youth development, workforce programming, and community healing. A central focus is supporting young people impacted by violence through initiatives like the Insight Initiative, a court-based program that promotes accountability, addresses trauma, and builds pathways to long-term stability. The Justice Center also provides paid internships in areas such as digital media and music production, along with placekeeping and community-led safety efforts that strengthen public spaces and local economies. City and State funding supports these

¹³ Sharlein, J. (2021, August). Helping the Youngest Start Life Strong: A Mixed Methods Evaluation of the Strong Starts Court Initiative. https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2021/SSCI_eval_full_report_FINAL4.pdf

integrated services and helps expand opportunities for residents while addressing the root causes of justice system involvement.

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.)

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.), operating in the Bronx and Brooklyn, uses the Cure Violence public health model to prevent gun violence through outreach, conflict mediation, and community engagement led by credible messengers. Staff work directly with individuals at highest risk, provide mentorship, and connect participants to services such as employment, education, and counseling, while also partnering with hospitals to intervene with gunshot victims and prevent retaliation. The program mobilizes residents, businesses, and faith leaders to promote nonviolence through outreach and public education. To strengthen this work, S.O.S. is requesting additional funding across Crisis Management System sites to expand coverage to 24/7 staffing, as current operations are limited to a single eight-hour shift despite violence occurring at all hours.

Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement (RISE) Project

The RISE Project addresses the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence through community-based prevention, healing, and accountability strategies in neighborhoods most impacted by violence. Working alongside Cure Violence programs, RISE engages individuals at high risk, including those who have caused harm, through voluntary interventions, case management, and connections to housing, employment, and behavioral health services. The program also leads community trainings, public education campaigns, and youth programming focused on healthy relationships and trauma, while elevating survivor leadership through a citywide advisory board and initiatives like Men Rising. In FY25, RISE reached approximately 10,000 New Yorkers through workshops, crisis support, youth programming, community-based prevention initiatives, community events and outreach. Funding supports these services, including community engagement, youth programming, and neighborhood-based prevention efforts that reduce violence and strengthen community safety.

Staten Island Justice Center

The Staten Island Justice Center serves over 2,000 residents annually through supervised release, counseling, case management, employment support, leadership development, and wellness programming for both adults and youth. In partnership with the Richmond County District Attorney, the Center is working to establish a borough-wide Community Justice Center where all programming can be housed. Building on a 2023 public safety assessment, the Center has launched and is currently expanding pilot initiatives focused on youth diversion and development. The Center is seeking funding to strengthen programs like Youth Impact through additional staffing and expanded cohorts in areas such as technology and the arts, as well as to support the Youth Wellness Initiative, which will provide wraparound services—including counseling, restorative justice, and family support—to 15 court-involved and at-risk youth. This funding will sustain and scale efforts to reduce justice involvement and promote long-term well-being.

Queens Community Justice Center UPLIFT

UPLIFT, launched in 2022 by the Queens Community Justice Center, provides trauma-informed services to justice-involved young men of color ages 16–25 who face high rates of violence, poverty, and prior victimization. Through individual therapy, group workshops, case management, mentoring, and victim services, the program helps participants process trauma and improve long-term outcomes, addressing a critical gap given that many justice-involved individuals have significant histories of violence exposure. With City Council support, UPLIFT has been sustained and expanded following its initial success. The Center is requesting continued funding to maintain and grow this program, which plays a key role in breaking cycles of trauma and justice system involvement.

Brownsville Community Justice Center’s Girls Collaborative

The Brownsville Girls Collaborative supports young women ages 15–18 at high risk of violence or justice involvement through a trauma-informed, leadership-focused program grounded in a rites-of-passage model. Participants receive academic support, leadership development, and exposure to career pathways—particularly in underrepresented fields—while engaging in mentorship and community-building activities that address the impacts of structural and interpersonal violence. City Council funding would allow the program to expand to serve more than 75 young women, including alumni, through aftercare, new projects, and workshops led by women professionals, while also providing stipends to support participation and economic mobility. This investment strengthens public safety by promoting healing, leadership, and long-term opportunity.

Conclusion

The programs outlined today demonstrate what it takes to safely reduce reliance on incarceration while strengthening public safety: sustained investment in prevention, meaningful diversion opportunities, and robust community-based alternatives to incarceration. These initiatives interrupt cycles of violence, support individuals in addressing underlying needs, and create pathways away from the justice system—outcomes that are essential to achieving long-term reductions in jail populations.

As New York City moves forward with the closure of Rikers Island, the success of that effort will depend on the City’s continued commitment to scaling and sustaining these solutions. Without sufficient investment in community-based programs, diversion, and alternatives to incarceration, the City risks undermining its own progress toward a smaller, more effective system. Continued City Council support for these initiatives will help ensure that New York City can meet its legal obligations, improve outcomes for individuals and families, and build a safer, more just system rooted in prevention, accountability, and opportunity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership in advancing these critical investments.



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Center for Justice Innovation FY27 Proposals

- **#2156900 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

Innovative Criminal Justice Programs (Renewal); Speaker's Initiative

Description: This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all. With expanded funding, the Center will be able to make deeper investments in housing justice: a key priority area that underpins our efforts at large to build community justice.

Community-Based Prevention

- **#2246699 - IPV Community Intervention - \$219,000**

Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (Renewal)

Description: This is an application for continued support of the RISE Project. RISE is a part of New York City's Crisis Management System, working in partnership with Cure Violence sites to provide community-based intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention services to individuals at risk of being impacted by gun violence in communities most impacted. RISE works to reduce IPV by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, change community norms to reduce tolerance for IPV, train credible messengers to identify risk factors for IPV, build skills to talk about IPV, and connect community members in need of services to

RISE. RISE incorporates components of the Cure Violence and restorative justice models in its work.

- **#2246286 - Queens Community Justice Center UPLIFT - \$100,000**

**Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Renewal);
Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal);
Speaker's Initiative (Renewal);
Community Safety and Victims Services**

Description: To address the high levels of exposure to community violence and trauma among young men of color in Queens, the Queens Community Justice Center piloted UPLIFT in FY22 with City Council support. Through the pilot, staff provided trauma and healing services to justice-involved young men of color, ages 16-25. Given the program's initial success, the Justice Center was able to fully implement and sustain the program, thanks to the ongoing support of the City Council. By offering client-driven individual therapeutic sessions and supportive group workshops, case management and victim services assistance, and advocacy and mentoring, UPLIFT participants are supported to recognize, process, and heal their own trauma, resulting in better life outcomes. This year, the Justice Center requests funding to continue UPLIFT's critical work through the following initiatives: Court-Involved Youth Mental Health, Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations, Community Safety and Victim Services, and Speaker's Initiative.

- **#2243733 - Brownsville Girls Collaborative - \$150,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (Renewal)

Description: The Brownsville Girls Collaborative (BGC), a cornerstone of programming at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is a leadership development program focused on the holistic empowerment of young women in the community. The program creates a safe space for young women from Brownsville, who are at high risk of violence or justice involvement, to engage with Justice Center staff, facilitators, and one another. Throughout the year, the Justice Center will work with BGC participants to address the root causes of trauma, violence, and risk behaviors to reduce justice system contact and develop participants into positive actors within the Brownsville community.

- **#2247007 - Staten Island Justice Center/Community Justice Center - \$200,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney’s Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation’s existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY23, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten Island residents. Continued City Council support has enabled the Staten Island Justice Center to use the results of the survey to inform the Community Justice Center planning process, as well as develop, pilot, and implement several new initiatives responsive to identified community needs. The Staten Island Justice Center respectfully seeks continued funding for FY27 to support this ongoing work, and, particularly, to sustain implementation of the piloted initiatives, and bolster programming by hiring a Youth Impact Case Manager.

- **#2246334 - SIJC Youth Wellness Initiative - \$130,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: This is a renewal proposal for the Staten Island Justice Center’s Youth Wellness Initiative (YWI), a program providing comprehensive wrap-around services to court-involved and justice-impacted youth in Staten Island, ages 12 to 18. The initiative aims to decrease the likelihood of long-term justice involvement while supporting those who may have unmet mental health needs. We specifically seek to engage youth who have either participated in community harm—such as assault, robbery, or gang violence—or who have experienced trauma through community or domestic violence. The primary objective of YWI is to foster restoration through transformative education, youth-led community engagement, peer support, individual counseling, and advocacy. The program also aims to help parents and guardians better support their children and help them navigate the justice system. Ultimately, participants are empowered to translate their therapeutic encounters into opportunities to reintegrate and restore themselves within their communities.

Diversion & Early Intervention

- **#2247221 - Bronx Project Reset - \$710,000**

Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks renewal funding to continue expanding diversion services for adults in the Bronx through its Bronx Community Solutions site. These diversion services build on Bronx Community Solutions’ success running the City Council-funded Project Reset restorative model for six years, the Center for Justice Innovation’s deep experience providing community- and court-based restorative justice programming since 2013, and the robust support and collaboration of Bronx court system stakeholders. With ongoing City Council support, Bronx Community Solutions will continue offering same-day at-arraignment Project Reset programming that gives eligible individuals the opportunity to participate in programming at their first court appearance and receive an immediate dismissal the same day. This programming, first piloted in 2024 with City Council funding, addresses the large gap in services caused by the inability to contact many Bronx Reset and Bronx HOPE (Bronx Heroin Overdose and Prevention Education) pre-arraignment diversion participants before their initial court date. Ultimately, these expanded diversion services reduce the collateral consequences of justice system involvement while instilling accountability; address underlying reasons for justice system involvement; and alleviate the massive backlog in the court system, an issue that disproportionately impacts the Bronx.

- **#2247172 - Driver Accountability Program - \$1,185,000**

Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation’s Driver Accountability Program has been proven to improve street safety by changing driver behavior, while minimizing harms perpetuated by the criminal justice system’s historically punitive responses. It does so by offering a proportionate and meaningful alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges; and by utilizing principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. The program currently operates at seven sites in all five boroughs, with six of those sites receiving support from City Council. This application seeks funding to sustain those operations, as well as the operations of its more intensive version, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims for a process of accountability and healing in cases where traffic crashes have caused critical injury or death.

- **#2247165 - Driving While Impaired - \$100,000**

Member Item; Bronx Delegation (New/Renewal)

Description: Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, DWI treatment, and enrollment in the Driver Accountability Program. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers of DWI treatment regularly charge \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 in order to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that still remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible, thus making Bronx streets safer. To eliminate this financial burden on participants and also expedite the treatment process, this application seeks funding to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI treatment coordinator so that BCS may continue to be relied on by the courts to do the necessary work of rapidly connecting mandated participants to treatment, resulting in safer streets for all New Yorkers.

- **#2246404 - Strong Starts Court Initiative - \$100,000**

Children Under Five (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks funding to build the capacity of the successful Strong Starts Court Initiative to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families throughout New York City and help build a sustainable program not entirely dependent on private foundation support. The Strong Starts Court Initiative is a Family-Court-based project; it employs a two-generational approach to provide specialized supports for infants, toddlers and their families who have child protection cases, and it works to educate court-based professionals in an approach focused on early child development that will transform the traditional family court response to this extremely vulnerable population.

Alternatives to Incarceration

- **#2247280 - Felony Alternatives to Incarceration - \$1,385,000**

Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks continued and expanded funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programming

for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. This programming offers holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions. Expanded funding would target two areas of particular need: housing support and peer support. Specifically, the additional funds requested would support the hiring of two additional staff members: a Housing Case Manager, and a Peer Mental Health Specialist. These two staff members would significantly enhance the capacity of the Felony ATI Programs to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our growing population, ultimately improving outcomes for participants and society.

- **#2243510 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court - \$250,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York City, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) is a specialized court that seeks to craft meaningful responses to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community, BMHC links defendants with serious and persistent mental illnesses (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) or neurodevelopmental disorders, who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, with long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. BMHC performs psychosocial assessments and psychiatric evaluations, comes up with treatment plans, monitors clients' adherence to treatment plans, and refers clients to community-based services. For FY27, BMHC is seeking renewal funding from the Speaker's Initiative to enhance its support of some the City's most vulnerable residents.

- **#2243598 - BMHC Court Involved Youth Mental Health - \$150,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of Brooklyn Mental Health Court provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of cases the program serves. Since 2017, more than 240 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court. City Council support ensures that Brooklyn Mental Health Court can retain a dedicated Youth Engagement Social Worker to lead youth programming and foster close relationships with participants. Renewed funding will enable Brooklyn Mental Health Court to continue and strengthen youth-focused programs, provide participants

with meaningful activities, supply healthy meals and snacks to participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain the position of Youth Engagement Social Worker.

- **#2246478 - EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants - \$300,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal);

Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs

Description: This is an application to expand the Center for Justice Innovation's Misdemeanor Alternative-to-Incarceration (ATI) programming in Queens and Staten Island across two operating programs: Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center by adding EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants. The goal of the ATI programs is to offer a single point of access to a wide array of community-based services as alternative sentencing options in criminal cases, thereby reducing incarceration and improving public safety by addressing the underlying issues that lead to justice system involvement. Funding will support staffing and program delivery to meet the unique needs of female ATI participants at the Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BRONX COUNTY

March 9, 2026

Speaker Julie Menin
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Menin and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, I am pleased to write this letter in support of key Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, Center for Court Innovation) FY27 City Council Applications. Funding will expand:

- pre-arraignment early diversion options;
- mental health supports;
- restorative justice programming;
- human trafficking survivor leadership initiatives at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence; and
- innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities within the Bronx.

These programs will enable the Bronx to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the legal system wherever possible and allow us to build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

For the past several years, the City Council has supported the Bronx with **\$710,000** to invest in early system diversion, which includes **Project Reset**, the Center's citywide pre-arraignment diversion model and same day at arraignments programming that re-directs New Yorkers with misdemeanor arrests from the court system. Project Reset Bronx includes borough-wide restorative justice circles to aid in diversion. This has offered relief from the collateral consequence's participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for low-level crimes. We support the Center in continuing to partner with the Council to implement the next generation of early system diversions for the Bronx to continue to lead the City in scaled restorative justice-based interventions. In 2025, Bronx Assist was launched, a promising pre-arraignment diversion program for certain Desk Appearance Ticket (DAT) arrests which is being piloted in the 44th Precinct with support from a two-year federal grant. CJI has demonstrated a willingness to partner on this project and has shown a willingness to see it succeed.

Thanks to meaningful changes in the treatment of trafficking victims in the justice system, the Center's **Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC)** referrals continue to decline. **Project Healing and Empowerment through Advocacy and Leadership (Project**

HEAL) is a survivor leadership and peer support initiative for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, we support the Center's RISE Project which is used in Family Court and provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence.

Since 2010, **Bronx Community Solutions (BCS)** has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, DWI treatment, and enrollment in the **Driver Accountability Program**. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services.

Finally, we support continuation of the Center's **Innovative Core Funding** which addresses the immediate needs of all borough residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, and mental health services with diversion.

The Center has a long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in the Bronx. Their mission to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities aligns with my Office's vision. Together we can reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice. We can do this by reducing incarceration as well as by building substantial and meaningful community-based support. I encourage the City Council to consider funding each of the Center's programs which will ultimately enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of the Bronx.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darcel D. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darcel Clark



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY

MICHAEL E. McMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

March 3, 2026

Speaker Julie Menin
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Re: Support for Center for Justice Innovation Fiscal Year 2027 Initiatives

Dear Speaker Menin and Members of the New York City Council:

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the Center for Justice Innovation's Fiscal Year 2027 funding request to expand alternatives to incarceration, provide enhanced mental health supports, develop early diversion programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, strengthen restorative reentry options for individuals and their families, expand pre-court eviction prevention initiatives, and pilot innovative programs that address pressing community needs across New York City. These initiatives represent thoughtful, evidence-based approaches that reduce unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system while advancing public safety through sustainable, community-driven solutions.

The Center for Justice Innovation has a long and well-documented history of conducting original research and implementing direct service programs that promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities across New York City, including Staten Island. These values closely align with the vision of the Richmond County District Attorney's Office. My office has proudly partnered with the Center in the development of the Staten Island Community Justice Center, an initiative designed to reduce crime and incarceration, strengthen community trust in the justice system, and promote safer, more equitable neighborhoods through community-driven public safety strategies, youth opportunity, and economic mobility initiatives.

To maintain existing operations while expanding programming, Justice Center staff will dedicate time and expertise to developing new initiatives, including designing data collection and evaluation strategies to measure program effectiveness and ensure accountability. Through this partnership, we continue to reimagine a more holistic and equitable approach to justice—one that emphasizes prevention, diversion, and meaningful community-based support alongside traditional court responses. Investment in the initiatives outlined above will allow this work to continue and expand its impact in Staten Island and throughout the city.

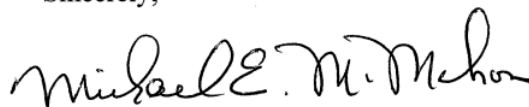
I also urge the Council to support **Youth Impact Staten Island**. Formerly known as Youth Court, Youth Impact is a dynamic youth leadership development program focused on peer mentorship, violence prevention, and restorative practices. The program works to keep young people engaged in school and out of the criminal legal system while fostering a youth-centered approach to community safety and healing. Through structured in-school partnerships and civic engagement opportunities, participants gain valuable skills in oral and written communication, facilitation, conflict resolution, and research. They also learn about the structure and impact of the justice system and receive training in community planning and organizing, empowering them to become leaders and advocates within their communities.

Continued investment is also critical to addressing the mental health needs of court-involved and at-risk youth. Individuals experiencing persistent and untreated mental illness must have access to culturally competent, trauma-informed mental health care. To address existing gaps in services for Staten Island youth, I urge the Council to continue and expand support for the Staten Island Justice Center's **Youth Wellness Initiative**. This program provides vital mental health services that promote healing and stability for young people involved in, or at risk of entering, the justice system. Importantly, the initiative also provides holistic support to families by offering resources and guidance to parents and caregivers of participating youth.

Finally, I support the continuation and expansion of the Center's **Driver Accountability Program**, which offers a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving offenses. This program seeks to meaningfully change risky driving behavior among individuals charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court while promoting greater accountability and safer streets for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration of this request as the Council makes important funding decisions on behalf of the City of New York. If you have any questions, please contact Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Grants Coordinator Dr. Lisa Sloan at (718) 556-7089 or by email at Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,


Michael E. McMahon
District Attorney

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF NEW YORK
ONE HOGAN PLACE
New York, N. Y. 10013
(212) 335-9000**



ALVIN L. BRAGG, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

March 20, 2026

Speaker Julie Menin
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Speaker Menin and Members of City Council,

I am writing to express my support for the important services The Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, the Center for Court Innovation) provides to help advance our public safety goals.

My office works closely with Manhattan Justice Opportunities (MJO) which offers case management services in Manhattan's Felony Alternatives-to-Incarceration Court. Pathways prosecutors also staff and work closely with providers in the Midtown Community Justice Center Misdemeanor Mental Health Court ("Midtown"). The case managers, resource coordinators, and social workers at Manhattan Justice Opportunities and Midtown's Misdemeanor Mental Health Court provide important connections to community-based resources, critical mental health and substance abuse interventions, case management, and monitoring for people charged with crimes. As a result of their work, we can address the underlying issues that may have driven participants' behavior and decrease the use of jail and prison in instances when we believe doing so may have a detrimental effect on public safety. MJO and Midtown are key partners in our public safety work.

Many of Midtown's Mental Health Court participants work with the peer navigators who staff Midtown's Community First Program. The navigators work to ensure that participants are connected to community-based services most critical to their continuing care during their mandate, and after graduating. Finally, our prosecutors regularly rely on the Center's Driver Accountability Program (DAP) to provide a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving and work to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court. DAP is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process. Our office has referred appropriate cases to Circles for Safe Streets to give families who have lost loved ones in vehicular accidents or victims who have been seriously injured in accidents another option in their healing process.

Speaker Julie Menin
New York City Council

- 2 -

March 20, 2026

Finally, the Center supports staff working at Midtown on the Community First team, neighborhood forums focused on community safety, and Midtown's Youth Advisory Board whose members work with the Midtown team to understand issues facing young people in their community so that the Midtown team may work to address them through their community-based work. These are efforts my office support.

Please feel free to contact my office with any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alvin L. Bragg, Jr.", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Alvin L. Bragg, Jr.
Manhattan District Attorney

Testimony of Caitlyn Passaretti, Senior Policy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Submitted to the New York City Council FY27 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Criminal Justice
March 24th, 2026

For 80 years, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) has been an independent voice for children advancing child and family well-being through research, advocacy, and civic engagement. With deep expertise in data, policy and child-serving systems, CCC champions proven solutions and mobilizes allies to secure reforms that improve child outcomes and promote equity. CCC drives systemic change to ensure every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

We would like to thank Chair Brooks-Powers and all the members of the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice for providing the opportunity to discuss how to improve the delivery of essential services and programs for NYC youth and young adults in the FY27 Preliminary Budget.

Restore Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Supportive Programming for Youth and Young Adults

Extensive research demonstrates the positive impacts of Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and reentry programs, including lowering recidivism and crime.¹ Moreover, for every dollar invested in ATI programs, studies estimate between \$3.46-\$5.54 in returns, in addition to reduced costs for the criminal justice system and better community health outcomes.²

Despite the well-established benefits of these programs, since 2023 the City Administration has cut millions from probation programs that have proven to be successful in supporting re-entry and connecting young people to mentorship and services. Failing to provide robust reentry services or supportive probation programs will harm our youth and is counterintuitive to building safe communities.

CCC supports the recommendations of the [New York City Youth Justice Coalition](#), including the following investments and restorations in the FY27 Budget:

- Restore and invest \$4.1 million for the IMPACT program
- Restore \$5 million for the NextSTEPs program
- Invest \$40 million for the Community Justice Reentry Network
- Invest \$1.6 billion to provide COMPASS programming for youth in detention
- Maintain \$2.4 million with a cost-of-living adjustment to each new year of funding for the Mentoring and Advocacy Program (MAAP)

¹ Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. ATI Report. Accessed: <https://criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MOCJ-ATI-RNR-Report-2019.pdf>

² New York State Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition (2024). Unlocking Potential: The Role of Community-Based Alternatives in Strengthening Public Safety. Accessed: https://www.lac.org/assets/files/Unlocking-Potential_The-Role-of-Community-Based-Alternatives-in-Strengthening-Public-Safety.pdf

- Invest \$30 million for NYC's Assertive Community Engagement and Success (ACES) program to ensure that all young people with risk factors have access to this kind of prevention model
- Maintain current funding for Family Court Alternative to Detention Programs to ensure young people and their families are successfully supported in the community.
- Expand Parent Support Services and create an open door policy for Family Support Services for youth as a prevention intervention
- Invest \$8.1 million for the Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program
- Invest \$8.5 million to reinstate, expand and fully fund YES services with original work scope as an effective impactful preventive tool
- Invest \$59.1 million for ATLAS funding
- Invest \$1.6 billion to raise the Cost-Per-Participant funding for youth in detention in COMPASS programming
- Invest \$3.2 million for NeON program funding
- Invest \$3.7 million for the WorksPlus Program
- Restore and baseline \$130,000 for the Adolescent Portable Therapy

Close Rikers and Invest in Supportive Services

As of July 2022, 22.5% of those in Department of Corrections custody were young adults between the ages of 18-25 –approximately 1,300 people.³ Furthermore, 90% of this population was being held pre-trial, meaning they have not been proven to have committed a crime and are presumed innocent. This age group, 18-25, is referred to as *emerging adults*. Brain science shows that brains are still developing until at least 25 years old, and that these young adults require an array of developmentally appropriate justice system responses. Emerging adults are more vulnerable to the harsh environment on Rikers Island and will be more impacted in their ability to re-enter society based on what they witness or experience while incarcerated.⁴

The harms of incarceration at Rikers are undeniable. Under the Adams Administration, 48 people died while incarcerated there.⁵ Moreover, in the first 6 months of 2021, 18-21 year olds were involved in 22% of the reported uses of force by staff but only made up 8% of those detained at that time.⁶ The dangerous impact of Rikers Island – and the disproportionate harm to young people – cannot be ameliorated by reforms alone.

NYC spends nearly half a million dollars each year to incarcerate just one person on Rikers, and that includes over \$370 million on overtime alone. New York must reinvest those resources in services that foster real community safety and wellbeing and prevent involvement in the criminal justice system. The

³ Columbia University Justice Lab. (2022). Emerging Adults Incarcerated at Rikers Island. Accessed: <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Emerging%20Adults%20at%20Rikers%20Overview.pdf>

⁴ Columbia University Justice Lab. (2022). Emerging Adults Incarcerated at Rikers Island. Accessed: <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Emerging%20Adults%20at%20Rikers%20Overview.pdf>

⁵ Vera. (2026). Tracking Deaths in NYC Jails Since 2022. Accessed: <https://www.vera.org/news/nyc-jail-deaths>

⁶ The Nunez Monitoring Team. (2021). Twelfth Report of the Nunez Independent Monitor

budget for Rikers Island should be redistributed and invested into services that support and assist the reentry of people experiencing incarceration and detention. **We join the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#) in urging the city to align plans to close Rikers as closely to the original 2027 goal as possible. Additionally, we urge the city to invest in age-appropriate mental health services, diversion and reentry services, and housing for people leaving custody.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Community Healthcare Network Testimony
For Committee on Criminal Justice

March 24th, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Erin Verrier and I serve as Director of Government Affairs for Community Healthcare Network, otherwise known as CHN. CHN is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) with 14 sites citywide, and a fleet of medical mobile vans, that provide critical primary care and social services for patients in underserved communities. Reaching close to 65,000 individuals annually, CHN welcomes patients of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay.

While our services are many, I write today to attest to the work we do for the justice-involved population. I'd first like to highlight the programs we already offer. Then I will introduce the program we are initiating in the coming fiscal year, for which essential capital funding from City Council is needed.

First, looking back, with federal funding from the Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), CHN has a Transitions in Care for Justice-Involved Individuals Program that, in partnership with the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Surveillance (DOCCS), provides care coordinators to support justice-involved individuals in their transition back into their communities and a care plan, with referrals, to address their health needs.

Second, with city funding under the DOHMH NYC Health Justice Network (HJN) Program, CHN connects community health workers, who have lived experience of re-entry, with participants to meet basic social, health, and material needs. Justice-involved patients seeking health services can be directly referred to CHN's primary care and mental health services, substance use disorder services, and other specialty services to support their re-entry into the community following incarceration.

Third, under the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Human Trafficking Initiative, CHN's HIV Treatment and Prevention Program, in coordination with the Queens County Criminal Court's Human Trafficking and Intervention Initiative (HTIC), receives referrals for transgender criminal defendants charged with prostitution to provide behavioral health, group counseling, and primary medical care.

Today, CHN is beginning a Brooklyn Criminal Court Mobile Program, for which we will operate a full-time medical mobile clinic outside the Brooklyn Criminal Courthouse offering primary care, behavioral health care, substance use disorder treatment, HIV prevention and sexual health services, and other ancillary services for individuals who are released following arraignment. Our partner, the Fortune Society, will work within in the court to identify potential justice-involved clients, offering patient navigation and case management.

To support this program, CHN requests \$200,000 from the Brooklyn Delegation to reach the \$350,000 total needed to purchase a new medical mobile unit. With CHN's long history of providing mobile-based



community health services, we are primed to utilize a new, fully upgraded mobile unit to ensure justice-involved individuals have ready access to high quality care.

On behalf of CHN, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and thank you for your continuing support of our work.



**TESTIMONY OF DR. MEGAN FRENCH-MARCELIN, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK STATE POLICY
AT LEGAL ACTION CENTER
Committee on Criminal Justice Budget Hearing
March 24, 2026**

Thank you Chair Brooks-Powers and the esteemed members of the committees for this opportunity to testify. My name is Megan French-Marcelin, I am the Senior Director of Policy at the Legal Action Center. Today, I testify on behalf of the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition, a network of 12 service organizations with decades of experience in providing holistic, community-based supports to justice-involved New Yorkers. In FY25, our organizations served more than 68,000 New York City residents.

New York City stands at a pivotal moment in its criminal justice reform journey. The long-overdue closure of Rikers Island forces us to confront a fundamental question: what does real safety look like? Because the truth is, we cannot jail our way to safety.

Indeed, for decades, Rikers Island has come to symbolize the worst failures of our criminal legal system—a place defined by horrific conditions, systemic abuse, and a culture of impunity. This is not a system that promotes public safety; it is one that perpetuates harm.

We also know that Rikers has effectively become the largest mental health facility in our state—without the capacity or commitment to provide real care. More than 60 percent of those detained have a diagnosed mental health condition, and at least one in five lives with serious mental illness. At the same time, at least half of the jail population struggles with substance use disorders. Yet evidence-based treatment is inconsistent, inaccessible, or altogether absent. People in crisis are met not with care, but with confinement. These are public health challenges, not problems that incarceration can solve. Warehousing people in abusive conditions does not address the root causes of harm—it deepens them.

Research clearly demonstrates that these programs are more effective than incarceration at improving safety outcomes: they reduce the likelihood of future convictions, decrease homelessness and psychiatric hospitalizations, increase connections to essential services, and foster civic engagement.

Not only are these programs more effective—they are also far more cost-efficient. A recent report from the New York City Comptroller estimates that incarcerating one person on Rikers costs over \$500,000 per year. In contrast, community-based alternatives generate significant savings: for every dollar invested, studies show a return of between \$3.46 and \$5.54 in benefits. Put simply, for

the cost of incarcerating a single person, approximately 50 New Yorkers could instead receive life-changing support in their communities.

If we are serious about safety, we must invest in alternatives that treat people with dignity and care. That means expanding access to mental health services, substance use treatment, supportive housing, and community-based programs that prevent harm before it happens. It means building systems that heal, rather than punish. And yet, I sit before you as providers face \$4.6 million in cuts to alternatives-to-incarceration and reentry services in the preliminary budget—despite what we know about the critical role these programs play in strengthening public safety.

Closing Rikers must mark a shift in values—a commitment to moving away from incarceration as our default response and toward solutions that recognize the humanity of every New Yorker. These programs are some of the most meaningful mechanisms we have available to envision and scale a more comprehensive, holistic approach to public safety - one that ends our overreliance on mass incarceration and instead, invests in the human potential of our city's most marginalized residents.

However, we cannot begin to ensure that our programs touch every eligible New Yorker or are responsive to new and changing conditions if we cannot pay staff adequately, expand services to meet those new needs, or pilot new approaches.

This year, we are asking the Administration for the restoration and expansion of funding for ATIs and Reentry services at MOCJ (\$10 million to each, respectively), a \$24.6 million increase from what is proposed in the preliminary budget. From the NYC Council the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million increase in the **Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs** initiative across our 12 organizations. These funds have been critical for our programs and the communities we serve because of their flexibility and responsiveness. With Council funds, our organizations are able to fill critical gaps and enhance services (and even pilot new programs) outside the bounds of restrictive contracts and RFPS that often leave both staff and services underfunded.

The Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs initiative currently provides funding for:

- For Fortune Society, discretionary dollars have supported intake and assessment for approximately 230 people, connecting them to all appropriate services across all of Fortune's service domains with specific support for 30 people in our ATI program in Education and Employment Services.
- CASES uses discretionary dollars to add ATI services to our mental health programs. Current funding supports 36 different staff positions, including fully funding two court intake coordinators to screen and enroll clients in our ATI ACT program and serves 90 people annually. NYCC dollars also allows CASES to hold mental health appointments for people leaving incarceration.

- Defender-based mitigation services to reduce lengths of stay in detention and provide alternatives to detention and incarceration.
 - In FY24, Osborne's Court Advocacy Services enrolled 796 people. 98% of those served with court-imposed conditions met all conditions. 93% of dispositions were successful. Through this work, CAS prevented 1,411 years of incarceration, with an estimated taxpayer savings of \$162 million.

With additional dollars, the Coalition could operationalize many new initiatives while ensuring some of the ongoing programs that have been bolstered throughout the years with Council dollars. This includes:

- New funding would allow CASES to staff a new Manhattan misdemeanor part. CASES staff already carry caseloads of 100 or more participants, thus new funding would be essential to alleviate staff capacity and ensure high quality services.
- For exalt youth, new investments would allow for the organization to serve approximately 15 additional justice-involved young people including providing access to education, mental health services, stipends, etc. This will save at least \$13.4 million in incarceration costs for the City.
- As one of the only programs serving primarily women, the Women's Prison Association would be able to serve 100 additional participants each year.
- Urban Youth Alliance would be able to expand their successful ATI programming for young people to Staten Island.

We have a choice before us: continue a cycle that has failed for generations, or invest in a future grounded in care, accountability, and true public safety. I urge you to choose the latter.

Thank you.

For further questions, please email Dr. Megan French-Marcelin at mfrenchmarcelin@lac.org or call at 617-869-1194

To: New York City Council, Committee on Criminal Justice

Chair: Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

From: Janelle Melohn, NATRC Senior Director

Stacey Wiggall, NATRC Director of Training & Technical Assistance

Re: New York City Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs)

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Good Afternoon Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of renewing funding for New York City's Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs). As of 2026, there are 56 TRCs across 18 states, working together through the National Alliance of Trauma Recovery Centers (NATRC) to advance equitable, evidence-based services for survivors of violence.

We are here today to speak about the four Trauma Recovery Centers in New York City, established in partnership with the City Council.

Since 2023, the Council has funded four TRCs as part of a citywide initiative to expand access to trauma-focused mental health care, support survivors of violence, and improve public safety. Without renewed investment, these centers will be forced to close at the end of the current fiscal year. This would mean that survivors of violence across New York City—particularly those in the most under-resourced communities—will lose access to critical services that support stabilization, recovery, and long-term healing. This risk is especially acute in the current climate of reduced federal funding for essential programs and services.

New York City's TRCs implement the evidence-based model developed at the University of California, San Francisco. These centers serve survivors of a wide range of violent and traumatic experiences, including gun violence, domestic violence, physical and sexual assault, human trafficking, serious motor vehicle incidents, and traumatic grief following homicide.

TRCs are specifically designed to reach survivors who are least likely to access traditional systems of care. Through assertive outreach and community-based service delivery, they

work to eliminate barriers such as cost, transportation, and distrust of institutions. Data from New York State TRCs in 2024 (3 in NYC, 1 in Buffalo) demonstrate that these programs are successfully reaching those most in need: 81% of participants were people of color, 48% were Black or African American, 58% were unemployed, and 37% lacked stable housing.

Through multidisciplinary teams, TRCs provide comprehensive, wraparound services that address both immediate safety needs and longer-term mental health recovery. This integrated approach produces measurable outcomes. Among those served, 70% experienced a reduction in PTSD symptoms, 50% saw a reduction in depression, and 67% reported an improved quality of life.

Decades of research show that survivors of violence face elevated risks of PTSD, depression, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions, as well as economic instability, including job loss, food insecurity, and housing instability. Without timely and effective intervention, trauma can initiate a cascade of long-term negative outcomes—for individuals, families, and communities.

Trauma Recovery Centers interrupt this trajectory. By providing timely, evidence-based care and practical support, they help survivors stabilize, heal, and regain control of their lives. In doing so, TRCs represent not only a public health intervention, but also a strategic investment in violence prevention and community safety.

We respectfully urge the Committee to prioritize continued funding for New York City's Trauma Recovery Centers. Sustaining these programs is essential to ensuring that all New Yorkers who experience violence have access to the care and support they need to recover and thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.



**TESTIMONY BY THE CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY REENTRY
COMMITTEE**

**PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

My name is Karen Adelman and I am a Co-Chair of the New York City Bar Association's Corrections and Community Reentry Committee. As a new administration assumes the Mayor's office, New York City faces a pivotal opportunity to reform its correctional oversight system. Persistent crises within City jails have ranged from staffing shortages, missed appointments, and inconsistent programming to dangerous, unsanitary conditions, visit denials, and the deaths of those in custody. The *Nuñez* case and recent appointment of Nicholas Deml as federal remediation manager have laid bare the systemic challenges and revealed structural weaknesses in accountability and governance.

Against the backdrop of these challenges, the City Charter already provides a mechanism to foster a more humane and just criminal justice system, enshrining the Board of Correction as the City's independent oversight body for correctional facilities. The BOC has been charged with this important oversight role for decades and will continue to perform its charter-mandated core functions long after Mr. Deml's tenure has concluded. But the drastic step of appointing a remediation manager should itself make clear how important it is to strengthen the BOC's capacity to execute its oversight mandate. To this end, we urge the Council to ensure that BOC has the resources it needs to perform its duties.

The BOC's mandate includes monitoring across the entire City correctional system, requiring continuous inspections, investigations, data analysis, and public reporting. Unfortunately, outdated technology severely hampers the BOC's ability to manage the voluminous amount of material generated by its monitoring. This deficiency slows down operations and limits the potential insights that can be drawn from the data which, in turn, hamstring the BOC's capacity to ensure compliance with its minimum standards and thwarts any ability to develop or implement innovations to meet real-time challenges. We believe it is essential that the next City's budget give BOC the resources to update the sorely outdated technology it currently uses for critical data collection and management. As the Council heard during the BOC's own testimony, the \$2M needed to update these

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 20,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.

crucial oversight tools is a minute fraction of the vast budget granted to the agency that the technology is used to monitor.¹

Adequately funding the BOC is, in fact, a cost-saving measure that mitigates long-term fiscal and legal risk and builds confidence in the system.² Empowering the BOC in this regard will enable it to act more nimbly when faced with crises and timely assess the needs present on the ground at the facilities at any given time. Equipped with the necessary resources, the BOC can serve as a type of early warning system, identifying and addressing risks before they escalate into injuries and, regrettably, the fatalities that have far too often plagued our City's jails. As the City begins to plan its transition to a completely transformed, geographically dispersed network of jails, it is even more crucial than ever that the BOC has the resources, technology, and the staff it requires to develop, monitor, and enforce its minimum standards. As it currently stands, staffing levels are insufficient. Beyond technology upgrades, BOC needs expanded inspection teams, compliance analysts, and subject-matter experts, to ensure it is able to cover the full breadth and depth of its duties.

Empowering the BOC will neither weaken the executive authority vested in the DOC nor interfere with DOC functions. To the contrary, strengthening the BOC will greatly benefit the City's correctional system by fostering transparency, early crisis intervention, and a robust exchange of data and policy initiatives that will reinforce institutional ties and public confidence. Properly equipping the BOC now is particularly vital given the looming legal deadline to close Rikers Island by 2027 and continuing challenges in the timely completion of the new borough-based jails. At this critical juncture, the City has the opportunity to empower the BOC to act as a bridge at the conclusion of the remediation manager's work and facilitate a seamless transition to a more effective, humane—and constitutionally sound—rehabilitation environment in our correctional system. Properly funding the BOC's technological requirements will help ensure that gains are solidified, progress is maintained, and an effective oversight mechanism remains in place after the *Nuñez* action concludes.

The Board of Correction must be the meaningful regulator the City Charter requires, not merely an advisory body. We respectfully submit that empowering this agency through adequate resourcing is a necessary component of the City's broader policy goals to advance public safety, uphold the rule of law, maximize operational efficiency, and protect human dignity. Thank you for your attention to these recommendations and for sharing our commitment to improve the health, safety, and fairness of New York City's correctional system. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss these and other

¹ Testimony by the New York City Board of Correction before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 24, 2026.

² It is estimated that in FY 2020, the full annual cost of incarceration in New York City reached approximately \$447,337 per person when all costs are included. *See FY 2022 Agency Watch List, Department of Corrections, Bureau Of Budget*, March 2022, https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Watch_List_DOC_FY2022.pdf. Because incarceration costs are so high, effective oversight that identifies inefficiencies, prevents abuses, and reduces jail populations can produce substantial fiscal savings and promote public trust. (Website last accessed March 23, 2026)

corrections system-related issues with your Committee and to offer our support and assistance.

Corrections and Community Reentry Committee

Karen J. Adelman, Co-Chair

Paul A. Montuori, Co-Chair

Contact

Mary Margulis-Ohnuma, Senior Policy Counsel | 212.382.6767 | mmargulis-ohnuma@nycbar.org

Elizabeth Kocienda, Director of Advocacy | 212.382.4788 | ekocienda@nycbar.org

**Testimony to New York City Committee on Criminal Justice
Executive Budget FY27**

Public Hearing

March 24, 2026

Nya Williams
Deputy Director
Court Advocacy Services
Osborne Association



Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers, and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Nya Williams and I am a Deputy Director with Osborne Association's Court Advocacy Services (CAS), providing defense-based advocacy for indigent clients. Osborne is one of the oldest and largest service providers in New York State assisting individuals and their families in navigating arrest, courts, pre-trial detention on Rikers, incarceration in state prisons, parole, and reentry. We serve 18,000 people each year, in NYC's five boroughs, as well as offices in Newburgh and Buffalo; we are in the courts, on Rikers, in state prisons, and in communities. Additionally, our Court Advocacy Services staff serve Westchester County through a satellite office in White Plains, as well as Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties through our Troy office. Through advocacy, direct service, and policy reform, Osborne works to create opportunities for people to heal, grow, and thrive.

We are grateful for the Council's ongoing support and look forward to continued collaboration. We have been providing Court Advocacy Services in New York City for 40 years. I want to note that MOCJ was the initial funder of these services and we thank them for their history of innovative and effective funding to advance safety and justice.

In my 21 years at Osborne, I have advocated for hundreds of individuals in NYC accused of law-breaking, often for serious offenses. In a recent case, I worked with a 40-year-old client with co-occurring untreated mental illness and substance use disorder. I interviewed, assessed, and advocated for an alternative sentence. He was sentenced to **time served** and **community treatment as an ATI**.

This client, like many others criminally charged, could have been seen as only his charge and offense, and not for his humanity and potential. With our advocacy, he was granted the opportunity to redirect his life. This outcome was a culmination of judicial buy-in and **zealous legal strategy that recognizes the effectiveness of CAS's mitigation and advocacy**.

Collaboration with defense attorneys promotes public safety while saving public dollars spent on pre-trial detention and prison sentences. Last fiscal year, CAS prevented **1,674 years of incarceration at a cost savings to the city and state of \$227 million**.

In Fiscal Year 2025, CAS programs:

- Conducted **804 intakes** – 73.3% of which were felonies, 25.3% percent misdemeanors, and 1.5% violations.
- Submitted **490 court reports/work products**, and had **2,387 case management contacts** with CAS clients.
- Achieved an **89% success rate for program exits**, and **98% of clients met all court conditions**.

Our impact can also be understood in the reflections from two attorneys at Legal Aid. Attached to my testimony is a letter from one, and the other provided this quote: "The Osborne

Association team shines a light on the dignity of our clients in the face of a system that makes them feel small and invisible. Clients have shared with me that Osborne social workers have laid down the bridges for them to realize their dreams, show that they are capable beyond expectations, deserving of investment, and valuable members of our NYC community. Without Osborne's collaboration, **much** freedom and **many** second chances would have been denied, but with their support, our clients have returned to their homes, families, jobs, and programs knowing they had others standing in their corners and rooting for them." – Nayeon Kim

As you consider where to invest the Council's resources, please consider the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of our services, and those of ATIs, generally, which are essential to achieving the closure of Rikers Island. While NYC faces very challenging times, we urge increased, upstream, cost-effective investment in ATIs, giving budget and population relief to strained city and state corrections systems. Solutions to these complex challenges lie in expanding court advocacy services, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and investing in supportive affordable housing.

Osborne is a longstanding member of the NY ATI & Reentry Coalition. **This year, we are asking the Administration for the restoration and expansion of funding for ATIs and reentry services at MOCJ, a \$24.6 million increase from what is proposed in the preliminary budget.** From the NYC Council, the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition is requesting an additional \$2.4 million increase in the **Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs** initiative across our 12 organizations.

We remain grateful for the flexibility Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) funding provides to our organizations as we work to decarcerate our jails and prisons with a particular focus on reducing the population on Rikers Island and moving towards its closure. For the cost of detaining one person on Rikers for one year (around \$507,000) – a year in which they are separated from their family, are likely to experience or witness violence, may lose their job and home, and experience deteriorating health and mental health – ATIs can serve more than 30 people, and yield positive and life-changing results that make us all safer. These programs are critical to closing Rikers as detailed in a [report](#), issued last year, entitled: *Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*.

Increasing, not reducing, investment in ATDs and ATIs is also an urgent matter of racial justice: as of March 26, 2026, 88% of people in NYC jails identify as Black and brown; 86% are being held pre-trial. Their detention has ripple effects, increasing stressors and challenges for thousands of children, families, and communities of color. Additionally, almost 100% of our clients have first been victims of violence and/or endured childhood traumas themselves. This harm was rarely named or treated, and so the saying "hurt people hurt people" continues to play out. But it doesn't have to. ATIs break this cycle of harm. They promote healing and safety. They demonstrate that the opposite is also true: "Healed people heal people."

My testimony includes a summary of the nine discretionary funding requests Osborne has submitted, all of which promote public safety and individual and community well-being. As you

negotiate this year's budget, we also support the following critical budget actions, and investments:

1. **\$6.89M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
2. **\$20.3M**¹ to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court involvement and mental health diagnoses.
3. **An additional \$3M to increase the Board of Correction's oversight capacity.** The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 27 more staff roles than they currently have² to adequately carry out their oversight responsibilities, and would ideally have a budget set at a minimum percentage of the Department of Correction.³
4. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.⁴
5. **Conduct a staffing analysis within DOC before the release of the Executive Budget** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

In closing, we urge an “all hands on deck” approach to decarceration, including investing in ATDs and ATIs; expanding treatment and mental health services; improving court processing times and court production; funding Second Look efforts; and expanding an array of housing options. We also call for reducing the trauma experienced by those who live and work on Rikers by investing in programming and visiting. Maintaining relationships and support systems for those detained benefits everyone on Rikers – including staff – and benefits their children and families. We applaud the City Council for passing three bills aimed at improving visiting at Rikers in March 2025, and holding the first-ever hearing on visiting last December. We encourage this committee to monitor the implementation of these visiting laws, and DOC's efforts to improve visiting.

It will take all of us working together, along with critical investments, to transform Rikers from a place that is filled with terror and tragedy to a smaller, fairer, safer place. Investments in community programs and communities – including alternatives to detention and incarceration, but also core services for young people, and addressing mental health and addiction – will help fewer people end up on Rikers in the first place.

Thank you.

¹ Approximately \$135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.

² Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of \$3.67M, per [Departmental Estimates](#).

³ Board of Corrections representatives [previously advocated](#) increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.

⁴ [February 2026 Departmental Estimates, Fiscal Year 2027 - All Volumes](#) p. 1379

New York City Council
New York City Hall
City Hall Park
New York, New York
10007

March 24, 2026

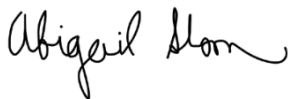
To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Abigail Sloan and I am an attorney in the Legal Aid Society's Parole Revocation Defense Unit. I represent indigent clients who are charged with violating the conditions of their Parole, who face any range of weeks to several years of reincarceration. Many of my clients are facing housing instability, homelessness, substance use concerns, medical conditions, and other challenges that come with adjusting to life in the community following incarceration in the New York State prison system.

Through my work at Legal Aid, I have the privilege of working with the Osborne Association's Court Advocacy Services, affectionately known simply as "Osborne". I have worked with Osborne for the entire time I have been an attorney at Legal Aid, and I have seen them advocate for countless clients, both in and out of court. Osborne and their advocacy, attention to, and care for our shared clients have kept many of our clients from returning to jail and prison, which would be incredibly disruptive for those who are already struggling to find employment, schooling, health care, and housing. Osborne's services and advocacy are frequently the only thing between my client returning to prison and remaining in the community, and without their services, many of my clients would be sent back to prison or jail. Being incarcerated is not only immediately disruptive to the lives of our clients, but it creates long-term challenges of again trying to re-integrate into society without the resources necessary to avoid the cycle of reincarceration. I can attest to how when Osborne helps people meet their basic needs, they are less likely to return to jail and prison and are more likely to find success in the community.

The services and the care that Osborne provides for our clients is truly transformative, and I can only imagine how many more success stories would come from an increase in funding for this program. I am happy to provide more information and can be reached at the email and phone number below.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abigail Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abigail Sloan, Esq.
asloan@legal-aid.org
646-618-0471

The Osborne Association

New York City Council FY27 Discretionary Funding Requests

Program	Description	FY27 Request	FY26 Funding
Alternatives to Incarceration (Ref. 2155808)	Osborne’s portion of the ATI & Reentry Coalition request, which will support multiple programs: (1) court advocacy and mitigation services; (2) video visiting and family strengthening activities; (3) expansion of job training and placement; (4) elder reentry services; and (5) the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations.	\$2,152,074	\$1,952,074
Bronx-Osborne Gun Accountability Project - BOGAP (Ref: 2242267)	To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA. Funds will be used to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional support services to participants to increase their chances of success in the program.	\$25,000	\$20,000
Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 2242507)	To support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative’s participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne’s advocacy and public education on behalf of incarcerated and returning older adults.	\$125,000	\$65,000

<p>Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 2241903)</p>	<p>To support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, prevention/treatment, trauma support, and other supportive services.</p>	<p>\$110,000</p>	<p>\$83,461</p>
<p>Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 2239478)</p>	<p>To support the implementation of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests parents/ caregivers. Osborne will provide necessary training and collaborate with NYPD on numerous aspects of implementation, and engage and train a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children. Expanded funding also allows for work to safeguard and consider children to expand to NYC DOC.</p>	<p>\$500,000</p>	<p>\$265,000</p>
<p>Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 2192640)</p>	<p>For assessing and addressing mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system through treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Targets: 70 assessments; 60 referrals.</p>	<p>\$308,000</p>	<p>\$158,000</p>
<p>Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 2243156)</p>	<p>To sustain and expand the <i>Kinship Reentry Housing Program</i>, which provides financial assistance, case management, and peer support to families housing a loved one returning from incarceration. By addressing economic and logistical barriers to stable reentry housing, the program reduces reliance on the shelter system, strengthens family reunification, and lowers the risk of recidivism.</p>	<p>\$250,000</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Fulton Community Reentry Center (Ref. 2242869)</p>	<p>To support a portion of executive leadership time, to advance the mission of Fulton, a 140-bed transitional housing program, through systems-level and individual advocacy for older adults impacted by long-term incarceration, both those currently incarcerated and those returning to the community.</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>	<p>\$10,000</p>
<p>Women with a Plan (Ref. 2243346)</p>	<p>To fund Women With a Plan which supports and creates opportunities for women affected by the criminal legal system to find strength in sisterhood and receive support in navigating their role as caregivers with incarcerated loved ones.</p>	<p>\$300,000</p>	<p>N/A</p>



**Testimony from Kimberly Blair, Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
March 24, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Committee. My name is Eman Gad, and I am the Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE is a Black feminist, intergenerational Brooklyn-based organization, reshaping culture and policy through advocacy, youth-centered programming, and narrative shift.

As a small, Black, queer and immigrant-led nonprofit doing critical racial, gender and sexuality justice and liberation work in the context of today's hostile world, the funding we receive is imperative to the development and growth of Black girls and gender-expansive youth of color across NYC. We request continued support from City Council for our FY27 youth programming, so we can continue to address the educational needs of young people across all five boroughs during this critical period.

We are facing democratic erosion nationally and the normalization of sexual violence against girls and gender-expansive youth. The lack of accountability for perpetrators in the Epstein files paired with the continual presence of ICE in our communities is impacting the mental health of youth that attend our programs. Young people feel powerless, which our staff has to respond to in real-time by shifting program curricula, increasing 1:1's, updating safety protocols, and developing a whole new organizing arm and campaign to tend to current, real-world needs and re-empower our young people.

Furthermore, attacks against “DEI” and racial justice work have led foundations to steer away from funding our work. This year, GGE is facing decreased funding from across the sector, with funders reducing investment away from gender and racial justice organizations. In response to these challenges, GGE has restructured by reducing staff and scaling back certain programs. This current FY, we are projecting a budget deficit of approximately \$1M, which underscores the urgency of securing multi-year, flexible funding and a stronger partnership with City Council to stabilize operations and sustain impact not just for GGE, but for **ALL** small organizations doing this critical work.

This is why we have formally launched the Alliance on Gender Equity, or AGE, and are requesting **\$300,000 in the form of a new City Council initiative** to sustain this work. AGE is a youth-led space for political education, civic engagement, leadership development and community-building for Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth of color. The coalition consists of our GGE youth participants, adult co-conspirators and non-profit allies. We convene with partner organizations on a monthly basis to see how we can support and uplift each other with our unique and shared priorities as we face growing attacks against our work and our communities.

To help build the youth alliance, we held a Town Hall In November 2025 centering young BIPOC girls, gender-expansive and LGBTQIA+ youth from all five boroughs. We heard from them in six priority areas, with many issues coming up that are of direct interest to this Committee, a demand for more restorative justice in order to stop the school to prison pipeline for Black and brown students. AGE turned these grievances and recommendations into a List of Demands for New York City and State, which is now the School G*rls Demand campaign, launched this month. We will share our demands and list of city-specific requests in the written submission, to keep this brief.

GGE is continuing to do the work and expanding our reach, despite financial constraints. With \$300k in support from City Council through the AGE initiative, we hope to continue equipping young Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth to fight for a NYC that is resilient against harmful national forces working against them.

1. **\$350,000 towards our Young Women’s Advisory Council** program funded by Young Women’s Leadership Development Initiative (YWLD) for political education and empowerment,
2. **\$200,000 towards our Sisters in Strength survivor program** funded by the Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE) initiative to support young survivors,
3. **\$100,000 towards the Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative** to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of youth ages 12-24, and
4. **\$250,000 in Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) funding** to continue our youth organizing work surrounding racial disparities in disciplinary actions and school policies, and promotion of restorative and healing justice measures and Alternatives to Incarceration.

We hope you consider supporting us in these endeavors. Thank you.

Send to: testimony@council.nyc.gov

Testimony of Good Shepherd Services

Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Submitted by

LuAnne Blaauboer

Vice President of Vocational Programs

March 24, 2026

Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers, and Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to testify today on the Mayor Preliminary Budget as it relates to the New York City Department of Probation (DOP).

My name is LuAnne Blaauboer and I am the Vice President of Vocational Programs at Good Shepherd Services where I oversee three Works Plus contracts. I am concerned about the decision made by DOP to end Works Plus effective June 30th. I am here today to talk about the value of these community-specific programs and how they support the most vulnerable populations of young adults such as those disconnected from school or work, youth whose lives have been disrupted by the legal system and youth living in communities that are suffering from the long-term consequences of systemic racism and poverty.

Large-scale programs, serving large numbers of people, with one-size-fit-all outcomes, are very much the norm. And it may seem like they are the most efficient solution to challenging issues like poverty and recidivism, but they are not because youth who are most at risk may not have the resources, the soft skills, or the baseline stability required to even engage in those kinds of programs in the first place.

If we want to move the needle on poverty, on community violence, on recidivism, then we need to look to smaller, hyper-local, “high-touch” programs, delivered by organizations with deep expertise and deep roots in the communities we serve - programs like Works Plus. These specialized programs allow us to give intensive levels of support to those most at risk of falling through the cracks – and they are a crucial part of the solution.

These programs have the ability to focus on truly connecting with young adults, because we know that for young adults – supportive, consistent and transformational RELATIONSHIPS trump every other intervention. In addition to standard work readiness content, these programs enable us to focus on soft-skill outcomes like showing up - because attendance issues are the number one reason young people do not succeed in jobs and training programs. We focus on

developing social-emotional intelligence, because we know that dysregulation on the job is a real barrier to job persistence for many systems-impacted youth.

Works Plus allows us to support young adults in building stability at the same time they are building the capacity to take advantage of career-level training opportunities down the road. These programs are the vital first step in a system of opportunities. And without this first step, those who need the resources the most are in the most danger of being left behind by one-size-fits-all programming. We will never be able to move that needle if we fail to invest in the people who are most at risk.

We urge the Council to protect high-touch, community based programming, like Works Plus by calling on the Administration to restore the program for Fiscal Year 2027 and to encourage DOP to work with providers to establish realistic outcomes that serve and support the most vulnerable young adults across New York City.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

From: [Bethel Hughes](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] R.Island Shutdown
Date: Monday, March 23, 2026 9:40:33 PM

Dear Councilmembers,

Since opening in 1932 to house some of New York City's most violent offenders, Rikers Island has lacked an effective plan for reform, rehabilitation, or safety.

As a former inmate, I witnessed pervasive violence between inmates and against staff. However, the most distressing experiences were seeing correction officers assault adolescents with riot sticks, smuggle drugs for inmates, and distribute weapons.

Rikers Island is currently beyond recovery because its system is broken. When a significant portion of the staff is corrupt, the facility is essentially being run by hired criminals tasked with overseeing others.

I am sharing these experiences to highlight the urgent need for systemic change.

Sincerely,

Bethel Hughes

--

Bethel Hughes (he/him)
Liberty House Senior Residential Aide

image.png



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ICNY
Interfaith Center of New York

**New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Budget Hearing – FY2027**

To: Chair and Members of the Criminal Justice Committee

From: The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, Interfaith Center of New York

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Interfaith Center of New York, a nonprofit organization which, over the course of 26 years, has built the most religiously diverse and civically-engaged network of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders across the five boroughs of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island and the Bronx.

The City's budget is a moral document, and it must reflect our collective commitment to dignity, care, and justice. The proposed FY2027 budget falls short of the City's legal and moral obligation to close Rikers Island and invest in the conditions that truly create safety for our communities.

At a cost of over half a million dollars per person each year, Rikers Island remains one of the most expensive and least effective systems in our city, while continuing to expose people to violence, neglect, and trauma. At the same time, the budget maintains excessive spending on incarceration while failing to adequately invest in supportive housing, mental health care, and community-based services—investments that are essential to rehabilitation and long-term safety.

This imbalance reflects a continued reliance on incarceration over the restorative and transformative approaches that lead to stronger, healthier communities. Faith communities across New York see every day that true safety is built through stability, care, and opportunity—not undue confinement.

We urge the Council to advance a budget that prioritizes reinvestment in strategies that reduce recidivism and moves our city closer to the closure of Rikers Island.

Specifically, we call on the Council to work with the mayor to:

- **Allocate an additional \$69.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers, including:**
 - \$41M to restore FY26 funding levels for [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) (IMT) teams, and an additional \$11M to fund 8 more teams, each serving 27 people.
 - \$4.5M to restore FY26 funding levels for [Assertive Community Treatment](#) and \$2M create four more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) (FACT) teams.

- \$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for [transfer to a state hospital](#).
- \$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.
- \$6M to restore cuts and add funding for crisis respite centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023, requiring the City to open four more crisis respite centers.
- **Allocate an additional \$48.5M for diversion and reentry services through the Office of Criminal Justice (OCJ), including:**
 - \$1.3M to restore cuts to Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, and \$3.3M to restore cuts to Reentry Services.
 - \$10M in additional funds for ATI programs and \$10M in additional funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#), to bring these evidence-based models to scale.
 - \$6.89M to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
 - \$20.3M to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
 - OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for [Justice Impacted Supportive Housing](#) (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.
- **Allocate an additional \$3M to increase the Board of Correction's oversight capacity.**
- **Eliminate unnecessary DOC uniformed staff vacancies and reduce overtime spending,** aligning staffing with a shrinking jail population.

Reforming our criminal justice and public safety systems will take moral courage and continued political leadership. We are grateful to the Committee on Public Safety for your attention and concern for the well-being, dignity, and humanity of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,
The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer
Executive Director
The Interfaith Center of New York

To: New York City Council, Committee on Criminal Justice
Chair, Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

From: Candace S. Hill, Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) Organizational
Development Manager, Just Safe & Scaling Safety

RE: New York City Trauma Recovery Centers

Committee Hearing: Tuesday, March 24, 2026

It is with great excitement that we provide testimony to elevate the significant impact of Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) in helping survivors heal and strengthening community safety. A sincere thanks to the New York City Council for your support in funding TRCs and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of continued funding.

The Trauma Recovery Center model works to interrupt the cycle of violence by supporting victims of violence in their journey towards stability and healing. Without support, victims of crime often experience housing and employment instability, substance abuse, mental health challenges, re-victimization, or contact with the justice system. To that end, Just Safe (formerly known as Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ)) advocates extensively to grow the model nationally.

[Just Safe](#) is a national organization that aims to win new public safety priorities in states across the country. We bring together diverse crime survivors as part of [Crime Survivors Speak](#) (CSS) flagship program to advance policies that help communities most harmed by violence. Collectively, CSS is a network of more than 200,000 crime survivors nationally. Our [TimeDone](#) program is a national membership of nearly 250,000 people living with a past arrest or conviction. TimeDone builds strong families and communities by organizing to end post-conviction poverty and advocating for policies that clear old records and reduce recidivism. [Alliance for Safety and Justice](#) (ASJ) is our multi-state, non-partisan legislative advocacy program that promotes effective policy approaches to public safety that are rooted in crime prevention, community health, rehabilitation, and support for crime survivors. Trauma Recovery Centers (TRCs) address all four areas and are a crucial bridge in connecting resources for victims of violence, preventing/reducing violence, and strengthening public safety.

Communities need more holistic, culturally sensitive, trauma-informed approaches to serving victims. Trauma Recovery Centers serve *all* victims of violence, especially those from communities most harmed by crime, who are disproportionately underserved. By

addressing unresolved trauma, TRCs help stop the cycle of violence and help victims heal.

The Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) [model of care began in 2001 with a single location in San Francisco](#), established to serve hard-to-reach survivors of violence who were unable to access traditional victim services. This model has since expanded significantly, with 56 TRCs now operating across the country. To meet the tremendous community need for trauma recovery services for traditionally underserved victims of crime, the [National Alliance of Trauma Recovery Centers](#) (NATRC) was founded. NATRC's mission is to build capacity and provide essential training and technical assistance to TRC staff nationwide.

TRCs deliver comprehensive care to survivors of violent crime who are grappling with physical and psychological trauma and are unlikely to access mental health and social services. By addressing both the visible and invisible wounds of violence, TRCs help victims and communities heal, which is crucial for interrupting the cycle of harm that can perpetuate violence.

Sustained funding for Trauma Recovery Centers is vital to disrupting the cycle of violence through healing those most impacted by it. We sincerely appreciate your support and respectfully request your continued commitment to funding all existing Trauma Recovery Centers in the 2027 and future city budgets. Furthermore, we ask that you support the establishment of additional trauma recovery centers to [scale up safety](#) and adequately [meet the needs of all survivors of violence](#).

Sincerely,

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Testimony

Preliminary Budget Hearing - Criminal Justice
Melanie Dominguez, Organizing Director
melanie@katalcenter.org

for

Committee on Criminal Justice

Tuesday, March 24, 2024 -- 9:30 AM
New York, NY

Thank you, Chair Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, for holding this New York City Council Preliminary Budget and Oversight Hearing on the Executive Budget of the Department of Correction for Fiscal Year 2027. My name is Melanie Dominguez, I'm the organizing director at the Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice, based in Brooklyn. Our members are from across the city, and include people who have been incarcerated, family members of currently and formerly incarcerated people, and more. Many of our members know exactly how horrific Rikers is and are deeply troubled that the closure plan is off track. This FY2027 budget proposal doesn't just fall short; it is a continuation of the status quo that persisted under the Adams administration. As a result, it leaves the Rikers closure plan in limbo and fails to address the rising jail population. While Mayor Mamdani continues to say he wants to close Rikers, those words fall short with this budget proposal. The city budget is where the rubber meets the road to save lives and close Rikers once and for all.

We submit this testimony to bring your attention to the crisis at Rikers and the need to shutter the notorious and deadly jail complex. Since the City Council passed the law to close Rikers Island in the fall of 2019, over 75 people have died in city jails. Violence at Rikers is out of control, and conditions at Rikers have long been horrific.ⁱ In 2015, a U.S. District Court appointed a federal monitor to regularly review and report on conditions there, and on progress, if any, for fixing the jails' problems.ⁱⁱ Conditions have gotten worse since then, and in January 2026, the federal court appointed Nicolas Delm as a remediation manager to address the decades of violence and dysfunction plaguing Rikers.ⁱⁱⁱ

As the humanitarian crisis at Rikers continues, New Yorkers' tax dollars are being used to perpetuate this violence. According to the City's Comptroller Office, the cost of incarceration at Rikers is more than \$500,000 a person per year, which is *\$1,390 a day*.^{iv} Incarcerating people in these inhumane conditions does not create safer communities, nor does it address survivors' needs. Investing in alternatives to incarceration has been proven to significantly reduce recidivism compared to jail and prison, and it also allows survivors to see the people who harm them held accountable and forge a pathway forward to create safer communities.^v

Along with deteriorating conditions and mismanagement under Mayor Adams, the jail population increased by over 1,300 between 2022 and 2025. Today, there are more than 6,680 people incarcerated in city jails.^{vi} Reducing the city's jail population was a central tenet of advancing the closure of Rikers, and this drastic increase highlights how the previous administration ignored and undermined the closure plan, which is now off track and significantly delayed.^{vii}

The increased jail population has coincided with a ballooning sub-population in need of mental health treatment. Today, Rikers is the largest mental health facility in New York City and among the largest in the country. Roughly 60% of New Yorkers held at Rikers have needed mental health services, 22% are diagnosed with a serious mental illness, and 25% suffer from an opioid disorder.^{viii} The conditions at Rikers are horrific and life-threatening for incarcerated people, and proper care isn't being delivered. Evidence and research have long shown that mental health programming in the community is dramatically cheaper and more effective than incarceration.

As the crisis at Rikers worsens, the jail population rises, and the closure plan remains off track, yet the FY2027 preliminary budget allocates \$2.99 billion to DOC, which represents a 5 percent increase for the agency budget compared with last June's adopted budget.^{ix} The Vera Institute cites that the "DOC's budget increase is driven largely by personnel-related costs rather than investments like educational, therapeutic, and reentry programming, which receives just \$14 million annually."^x If the mayor is truly committed to shutting Rikers, the city budget should *decrease* the DOC's budget and personnel costs to align with the closure plan and invest in proven solutions to safely reduce the jail population. Yet, this proposal does the exact opposite.

As the administration proposes increasing the bloated DOC budget, the Board of Corrections budget is once again underfunded at a time when oversight is critical. Additionally, this increased funding of the DOC means the mayor is not meeting his commitments to sustainable funding services that New Yorkers rely on: the mayor said he'd commit 0.05% of the city budget to libraries, but actually proposes *cutting* library budgets from the last year. The mayor said he'd commit 1% of the city budget to parks, but has failed to meet that commitment too.^{xi} But here we are discussing *increases* to the DOC budget. This budget continues the status quo of increasing the budgets used to cage people while inadequately funding the programs and services proven to keep our communities safe and thriving without relying on incarceration.

Another key problem with this proposed budget is that it fails to investigate and address the increased costs to the Borough-Based Jails (BBJ), which have risen from the original estimate of \$8 billion when the closure law was enacted in 2019 to nearly \$16 billion today. The mayor and the city council have a moral and fiscal obligation to investigate why these costs are going up and what options might be available to reduce those costs, especially given that the timelines associated with these facilities (which now go well into the 2030's) are completely off-track and don't align with the mayor's stated position that he wants to follow the law to close Rikers by 2027.

This glaring disconnect is alarming, and unless it is quickly remedied, the status quo from the previous administration will persist. The mayor and city council can no longer

continue approving the DOC budget without more details on the BBJ's cost overruns and timelines. The city clearly has no intent on meeting the legal closure deadline of 2027, but neither has it reconfigured the plan to provide a definitive date of when Rikers *will* be closed. This reality, coupled with the jail population rising due to the city's limited effort, as reflected in this budget proposal, raises major concerns about the city's commitment to closing Rikers.

The city has other options available -- there are proven solutions to safely reduce the jail population and advance closure that the city can fund and implement in this year's budget. In November 2025, we issued a report with the Data Collaborative for Justice at John Jay titled, "Rikers Island and Mental Health: Pathways Toward Community-Based Diversion and Jail Population Reduction." To reduce the number of people incarcerated at Rikers with a mental health diagnosis and advance the closure plan, this report lays out a 15-point plan focused on advancing community-based diversion from Rikers through:

- City-Led Continuum of Expanded Diversion Options
- Alternatives for People at All Stages of Mental Competency Proceedings
- Greater Access to Mental Health Courts
- Effective Linkages from Courts and Jails to Community-Based Treatment
- Hospital-Based Secure Therapeutic Beds in Lieu of Rikers

Research from the Vera Institute for Justice aligns with the recommendations of our mental health report and calls on the mayor and city council to increase investments in the following programs:

- "11 million for eight more Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams and \$2 million for four more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams, to scale up community-based mental health treatment and eliminate long waitlists for care
- \$20.3 million for 150 units of low-barrier housing, accompanied by a commitment to assess the need for transitional reentry housing and fund additional units accordingly;
- \$1.3 million for alternatives to incarceration (ATI) and \$3.3 million for reentry services to offset slated budget cuts, \$6.9 million to expand programs serving court-involved young people with mental health needs, and \$10 million in additional ATI funding to scale services up to meet demonstrated need;
- \$3 million in additional funding for the Board of Correction (BOC) to enable the agency to hire staff for rigorous jail oversight; and
- \$17.5 million in additional B-HEARD funding to make non-police mental health crisis response available 24 hours a day within its current operating boundaries

and include peer specialists, who would bring valuable expertise to response teams.”^{xii}

These recommendations offer clear, proven solutions to safely reduce the jail population and ensure people receive the effective care they deserve.

To address this ongoing crisis at Rikers, we urge the NYC Council to pass an FY2027 budget that fulfills its commitment to shutting down Rikers.

We urge this council to focus on three things: **first**, cut the budgets used for caging people – the DOC budget is bloated, wasteful, and must be cut. The city must also reduce the number of people incarcerated at Rikers by implementing the recommendations outlined above. **Second**, the closure of Rikers is not just a moral and legal imperative, but given the extraordinary savings that can be realized, it is also a *fiscal* imperative. The Council must pass a budget that advances efforts to shutter the notorious jail complex. **Third**, we must increase investments in things that produce real community safety: housing, healthcare, including mental health, education, and jobs. The city must also invest in responses to violence that are survivor-centered, accountability-based, safety-driven, and racially equitable.

The City Council must use its budgetary power to advance the closure of Rikers and hold the mayor accountable to the closure law. Lives are at stake.

ⁱ Reuven Blau. “Assaults, Chaos and Deception: New Rikers Report Details Widespread Dysfunction.” *The City*. January 14, 2026 <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/01/14/rikers-monitor-report-assaults-violence/>

ⁱⁱ Benjamin Weiser. “New York City Settles Suit Over Abuses at Rikers Island.” *The New York Times*. June 22, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/nyregion/new-york-city-settles-suit-over-abuses-at-rikers-island.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Hurubie Meko. “Judge Names Former C.I.A. Officer to Take Control of Rikers.” *The New York Times*. February 11, 2026 <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/27/nyregion/rikers-island-control-deml.html>

^{iv} New York City Comptroller. “Ensuring Timely Trials.” July 16, 2024.

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/ensuring-timely-trials/>

^v Common Justice. “How and Why Many Survivors Benefit From Restorative Justice Alternatives to Incarceration.” January 21, 2026. <https://commonjustice.org/resource/how-and-why-many-survivors-benefit-from-restorative-justice-alternatives-to-incarceration>

^{vi} For the data, see Vera Institute for Justice. “New York Criminal Legal System Hub .” March 23, 2025.

<https://www.vera.org/ny-data-hub/Jail>.

^{vii} Independent Rikers Commission, “A Path Forward: The Blueprint to Close Rikers.” *A More Just NYC*. March 2025.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/6802a228b5619e3f5bafd0cf/1745003055967/Independent+Rikers+Commission+Blueprint+to+Close+Rikers+Island+March+2025.pdf>

^{viii} John Jay College, Data Collaborative for Justice and the Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice. *Rikers Island and Mental Health: Pathways Toward Community-Based Diversion and Jail Population Reduction*. November 2025 <https://katalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Rikers-Island-and-Mental-Health-Pathways-Toward-Community-Based-Diversion-and-Jail-Population-Reduction-11.19.25.pdf>

^{ix} Vera Institute for Justice, "A Look Inside the Fiscal Year 2027 New York City Department of Correction Budget." March 2026. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf?dm=1773851668>

^x Vera Institute for Justice, "A Look Inside the Fiscal Year 2027 New York City Department of Correction Budget." March 2026. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf?dm=1773851668>

^{xi} NYC Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani, "The Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget." Financial Plan Summary. February 17, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/sum2-26.pdf>

^{xii} Vera Institute for Justice, "A Look Inside the Fiscal Year 2027 New York City Department of Correction Budget." March 2026. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf?dm=1773851668>



**TESTIMONY OF
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY**

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

City Hall,
New York, NY

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Preliminary Budget Hearing

PURPOSE: To emphasize the need to invest more in Alternatives to Incarceration, Reentry Services, and the Board of Corrections

Presented by

Reggie Chatman

Director of Policy, David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy

The Fortune Society
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Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Reggie Chatman, and I am the Director of Policy for The Fortune Society's David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about The Fortune Society's work and how alternatives to incarceration (ATI) and reentry programs are essential in promoting public safety and desistance while empowering people to rebuild their lives.

For over 58 years, The Fortune Society (Fortune) has been committed to supporting people returning from incarceration and providing meaningful alternatives to incarceration. Guided by the lived experiences of those we serve, our work is rooted in the belief that people can change when given the right support and opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2025, Fortune served more than 18,000 New Yorkers through our broad array of programs, including employment services, mental health and substance use treatment, and housing; this all includes more than 1,000 people served through our Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs. Every day we see how comprehensive, community-based programming and interventions can change lives, break cycles of involvement in the justice system, and create safer communities for all of us. We have no wrong front door, meaning that whether someone is mandated to participate in our services or comes to us voluntarily, and regardless of which program is their initial form of engagement, they can avail themselves of everything we have to offer.

Fortune is proud to be a member of the NYC ATI/Reentry Coalition, a network of 12 service providers collectively serving more than 30,000 people each year and with decades of experience offering a diverse, person-centered array of programs. But we know that collectively, we can and should be serving even more to reduce the number of people needlessly detained on Rikers Island and to enhance true community safety. Therefore, we are requesting that the Administration restore and expand funding for ATI and reentry services, an increase of \$24.6 million above what is proposed in the preliminary budget. We also request an increase of \$2.4 million in the Council's Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Programs initiative. We are grateful that the Council stood with us in preventing our funding from being cut in Fiscal Year 2026, and we urge the Council to stand with us again: not just to prevent cuts, but to ensure increases to support expansion of this important work.

In Fiscal Year 2025, 83% of our participants successfully completed their ATI programming, and 92% of participants, many of whom are youth and young adults, successfully

completed gun diversion programming. However, ATI and reentry programs go beyond fulfilling court and supervision mandates; rather, they serve as entry points to a network of services that continue to support individuals as they navigate their lives following release. Fortune is proud to make a lifetime commitment to anyone who comes through our doors; people are welcome to remain engaged in our services even if they have completed a court or parole mandate, and many continue to visit our service centers weekly for creative arts workshops, therapy appointments, or to take additional employment services workshops to boost their employability. These interventions not only support individual transformation but also create broader community benefits by reducing reliance on incarceration and fostering pathways to stability.

We are grateful to the new Administration for its commitment to reimagining community safety, but the first step in confronting our City's overreliance on incarceration is to begin redirecting funding towards decarceration. Our programs, and those of our sister organizations, are crucial to safely reducing the Rikers population, and thus we should be scaling them up as opposed to increasing the budget of the Department of Correction (DOC). ATI and reentry programs cost a mere fraction of the nearly \$500,000 it costs to hold a single person on Rikers Island per year.¹ About 87% of the DOC funding relates to personnel costs and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has authorized a uniformed headcount of more than 7,000 officers through the end of Fiscal Year 2030 – three years after the city's deadline to close Rikers Island.² Such an increase in staffing is unnecessary, especially as the Administration has committed to decarcerating over the next few years to adhere to the plan to close Rikers Island and open the borough-based jails. This headcount would also equate to a staffing ratio that is four times higher than the national average.³ We are hopeful that under new DOC leadership, the agency will critically assess its management and deployment tactics to better staff its facilities, keeping both incarcerated people and officers safer.

We also urge the Council to negotiate for \$3 million in additional funding for the Board of Correction (BOC). We are proud that our City is one of the few in the nation that established a

¹"A Look Inside the Fiscal Year 2027 New York City Department of Correction Budget." *Vera Institute of Justice*. March 2026. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf?dm=1773851668>

²Ibid.

³Zeng, Zhen. "Jail Inmates in 2023 – Statistical Tables." *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. April 2025. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/jail-inmates-2023-statistical-tables/web-report>

non-judicial oversight board to regulate, monitor, and inspect our City's correctional facilities. This \$3 million increase for the BOC would represent just 0.1% of DOC's total budget, but it is an essential increase; for BOC to fully meet its City Charter mandate, they must be able to hire additional staff. Even though we are hopeful that under a new Administration and DOC leadership conditions inside our jails will improve, independent monitoring remains important for accountability and transparency.

Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of this Committee for the opportunity to testify today.



**The New York City Council
Committee On Criminal Justice
Chair: Selvena N. Brooks-Powers**

**New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on The Preliminary
Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.**

Testimony of
The Legal Aid Society Prisoners' Rights Project and Incarcerated Client Services
Unit Support For Increased Funding to Support Crisis Hotline Services, On-site
Services, and Programming for New Yorkers Incarcerated in NYC.

March 24, 2026

Presented by:

Barbara P. Hamilton
Director, Incarcerated Client Services Unit
BPHamilton@legal-aid.org

Mary Lynne Werlwas
Director, Prisoners' Rights Project
MLWerlwas@legal-aid.org

The Legal Aid Society
Criminal Defense Practice
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Introduction

The Legal Aid Society, founded in 1876, is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit legal services agency, providing comprehensive legal services to low-income individuals and families in all five boroughs of New York City. Legal Aid's mission is to improve the lives of low-income New Yorkers by ensuring that no New Yorker is denied access to justice because of poverty. For over 55 years, Legal Aid has worked to improve confinement conditions and protect the fundamental human rights of incarcerated individuals in New York City jails and juvenile detention facilities.

The Prisoners' Rights Project (PRP) has brought landmark litigation to redress abuse and mistreatment in the jails, obtaining numerous consent decrees that often form the basis for lasting jail policies. PRP engages in litigation and individual advocacy to protect the health and safety of people incarcerated in New York City jails. To further that work, Legal Aid's Incarcerated Client Services Unit (ICSU) operates an incarcerated persons crisis hotline and has client advocates on-site at each jail facility to address the needs of incarcerated persons in the City jails. Together, PRP and ICSU ensure that incarcerated people and their families have access to advocacy, legal representation, and support to address unsafe conditions, denial of care, and violations of basic rights.

For years, Legal Aid has advocated for more robust programming in the City jails to reduce violence in the jails and to support people while incarcerated. Through this testimony, Legal Aid calls on the City to invest more funding to support crisis hotline services, to expand services to address urgent unmet needs in reentry support and youth justice, and to increase social programming and reentry services for New Yorkers incarcerated in New York City.

Increase Funding to Support Crisis Legal Aid Services for New Yorkers Held in New York City

People in carceral settings face significant challenges and trauma while incarcerated, and they require support and services to manage the realities of incarceration and ensure their basic needs are met by an often indifferent bureaucracy. Legal Aid provides services through its incarcerated persons hotline and our on-site paralegals assigned to each jail facility. In fiscal year 2027, Legal Aid is seeking additional funding totaling \$2.7 million to increase our hotline response capacity.

Additional funding will enable Legal Aid to expand staffing and advocacy for youth detained or sentenced to incarceration in the City.

Legal Aid's current hotline and paralegal staff serves all people in City custody and their families, including those represented by other defense organizations, private counsel, and 18-b attorneys. Legal Aid's hotline for incarcerated individuals and their families helps people in custody manage issues such as access to medical and mental health care, threats of violence and protection from harm, sexual abuse, discrimination, educational assistance for young, incarcerated people, and oppression and mistreatment of disabled and LGBTQ people in custody. Legal Aid's skilled client advocates conduct both initial and follow-up interviews with incarcerated people, and then, in consultation with attorneys, advocate directly with DOC and other agencies to ensure these individuals' needs are met. They also provide accurate and relevant know your rights information to incarcerated people and their families. With the information received from the hotline, our staff identify systemic deficiencies and develop strategic responses to foster solutions to the chronic issues experienced collectively by incarcerated individuals and their families.

Legal Aid also has client advocates posted in every facility run by the Department of Correction (DOC) who incarcerated people can meet in person and receive real-time assistance. Our client advocates in the City jails are hands-on, and they routinely conduct physical wellness checks on people in custody. The client advocates assist people in custody with navigating the DOC bureaucracy with matters like obtaining medical and mental health treatment or the ability to attend the funeral of a family member. Sometimes the client advocates receive calls from people on the hotline with physical ailments, suicidal ideations, or mental health breakdowns. In these cases, the person will be called to the Legal Aid office at the facility, and the client advocate will physically walk a person to the health clinic, mental health staff, or if necessary, get DOC staff to escort them.

Legal Aid's client advocates help people with a range of issues like getting in contact with their attorney, sentencing discrepancies, access to programming, law library access, and other issues related to confinement. In the case of sentencing discrepancies, Legal Aid paralegals review the commitment paperwork and, if there is a mistake, which happens sometimes with sentences running consecutively instead of concurrently, the paralegal will reach out to the attorney and even the courts to have the commitment paperwork amended. During fiscal year 2025, Legal Aid

paralegals fielded over 6,600 hotline calls and addressed 2,280 complaints received from incarcerated individuals detained at Rikers and their families.

Legal Aid represents most of the youth prosecuted in NYC and held in secure detention facilities. Funding is needed for Legal Aid to create a dedicated youth hotline to allow incarcerated youth to contact us and to provide real-time support to address urgent safety concerns, mental health care, education, attorney communication, and family contact. These facilities currently hold more than 100 youth beyond capacity, placing youth in these facilities under tremendous stress. In 2024, Legal Aid assigned one attorney to address conditions in these facilities, who was immediately overwhelmed by the volume and urgency of need.

Legal Aid urges the City Council to increase its funding for our detention and jail services to \$2.7 million in fiscal year 2027. This additional funding will enable Legal Aid to expand the volume and efficacy of our services to further advance the dignity and basic needs of incarcerated people.

Increase Funding for Social Programming and Reentry Services to Support People in Detention and the City Jails

At a time when the City is on a path to closing Rikers Island and creating a smaller more humane jail system,¹ divestments in social programming for incarcerated people run contrary to this goal. Instead, to achieve this end, the City must make investments in programs that support people confined in the detention and jail system and helps them upon their release remain in their communities.

Each year, thousands of people with serious mental illness and addiction issues cycle into the City jails. Almost 90% are jailed pre-trial, and most are released back to their communities.² As the Independent Rikers Commission found, “[f]requently, they are destabilized, worse off than when they went in. The result is further harm, reduced safety – and often, re-incarceration.”³ Investments

¹ A More Just NYC, Closing Rikers Island, *A Roadmap for Reducing Jail in New York City*, July 2021, available at <https://www.morejustnyc.org>.

² A More Just NYC, available at <https://www.morejustnyc.org>.

³ *Id.*

in correctional programming have a meaningful impact and a high return on the investment.⁴ Programming in jail settings helps maintain a safe environment within facilities, creating a more stable and humane jail system, and ultimately can help reduce the cost of maintaining a correctional facility.⁵ Programming also improves post-release employment outcomes, and better employment outcomes drastically reduces the likelihood of recidivism and ensures broader public safety.⁶ Despite these evidence-based reasons to support programming, in 2023 Mayor Adams' administration cut \$17 million from the DOC's budget for social programming. The City Council should at least restore funding to \$17 million for programming.

The City Council should also invest additional funds in community resources including reentry services to further the City's mission of creating a more humane and just system and to reduce the current jail population. For example, there should be at least 250 residential beds created in the community for people with serious mental illness and substance abuse disorders. There should be an expansion of Justice Involved Supportive Housing in the community and full funding for Crisis Respite Centers mandated by Local Law 118-2003.

Thank you for your oversight and your time and consideration of this testimony.

⁴ National Institute of Justice, *The Use and Impact of Correctional Programming for Inmates on Pre- and Post-Release Outcomes*, June 2017, Grant Duwe, Ph.D., Minnesota Department of Corrections available at <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250476.pdf>.

⁵ Prison Reform: Reducing Recidivism by Strengthening the Federal Bureau of Prisons, available March 6, 2024, at <https://www.justice.gov/archives/prison-reform>.

⁶ *Id.*



UNITED PROBATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Budget Hearing – March 24, 2026

Dalvanie K. Powell, President

United Probation Officers Association (UPOA)

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Dalvanie K. Powell, and I am the President of the United Probation Officers Association. UPOA represents Supervising Probation Officers, Probation Officers, Probation Officer Trainees, and Probation Officer Assistants within the New York City Department of Probation. Every day, our members work hard to give New Yorkers involved in the criminal justice system a second chance, while balancing the need to keep our communities safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on why the city must invest in the Department of Probation.

Since the appointment of Commissioner Sharun Goodwin, we have seen meaningful progress in a short period of time.

Administrative processes are improving, including a more responsive HR unit, faster resolution of disciplinary matters, and movement on long-standing grievances.

Family Court staffing has been strengthened, recruitment is ongoing, and the training academy is being restored to a 6–8-week model.

We are also engaged in productive discussions around scheduling, uniforms, and safety policies, and experienced staff who have left under previous leadership are beginning to return to the agency.

However, despite this progress, the Department remains in a critical state.

Today, there are fewer than 600 Supervising and Probation Officers, while the budgeted headcount is 845. Within weeks, we expect to lose dozens more officers to other agencies,

including Parole, NYPD, DOC, and neighboring probation departments. Officers are not leaving because they want to—they are leaving because our salaries are significantly lower than other law enforcement agencies, despite Probation requiring a college degree.

As documented by the State Comptroller, the Department of Probation has had the highest attrition rate of any city agency. In just the past few years, more than 200 officers have left, while hiring has failed to keep pace. Each departure increases the workload on those who remain. Cases are reassigned. Caseloads grow. Burnout intensifies. This is unsustainable and directly impacts public safety.

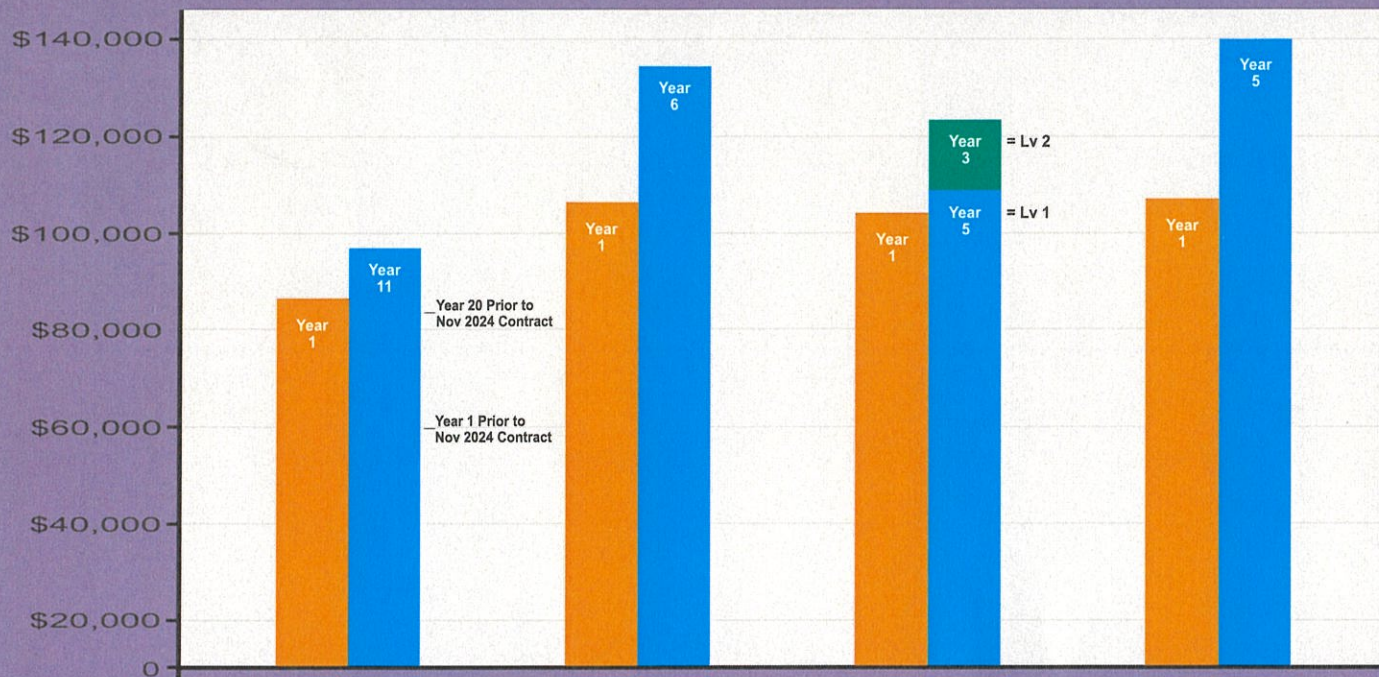
Our workforce is predominantly women and people of color, and we have been in pay equity litigation since 2019. As the City focuses on affordability, pay equity must be part of that commitment. Resolving this issue is essential to stabilizing the workforce and supporting the Commissioner's vision for the agency.

In conclusion, Probation Officers are tasked with helping individuals stabilize their lives while keeping our neighborhoods safe. We are asking the City Council and the Mayor's Office to stabilize this workforce by addressing pay equity and investing in retention.

When Probation is strong, public safety is stronger.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

Pay Comparison Across NYC Law Enforcement Agencies



NYC Department of Probation

Supervising Officer Salary

Hiring rate **\$86,500** as of Nov 2024
(Prior to Nov 2024 **\$61,276**)

At **11 years \$95,100** as of Nov 2024
(Prior to Nov 2024 **\$84,400** After **20 years**)



NYC Department of Correction

Captain Salary

Hiring rate **\$107,577**
At **6 years \$134,819**



NYC Sheriff Department

Supervising Deputy Sheriff Salary Lv1 & Lv2

Hiring rate **\$106,620**
Level 1 at **5 years \$115,452**
Level 2 at **3 years \$124,776**



NYC Police Department

Sergeant Salary

Hiring rate **\$114,037**
At **5 years \$140,212**

Pay Comparison Across NYC Law Enforcement Agencies



**NYC Department of Probation
Officer Salary**

Hiring rate **\$61,386** as of Nov 2024
(Prior to Nov 2024 **\$45,934**)
At **11 years \$81,000** as of Nov 2024
(Prior to Nov 2024 **\$65,107** After **20 years**)



**NYC Department of Correction
Officer Salary**

Hiring rate **\$61,754** as of 3/1/26
At **5.5 years \$123,978**



**NYC Sheriff Department
Deputy Sheriff Salary**

Hiring rate **\$36,577**
After **6 months \$47,654**
Level 1 at **5.5 years \$92,073**
Level 2 at **6 years \$104,210**

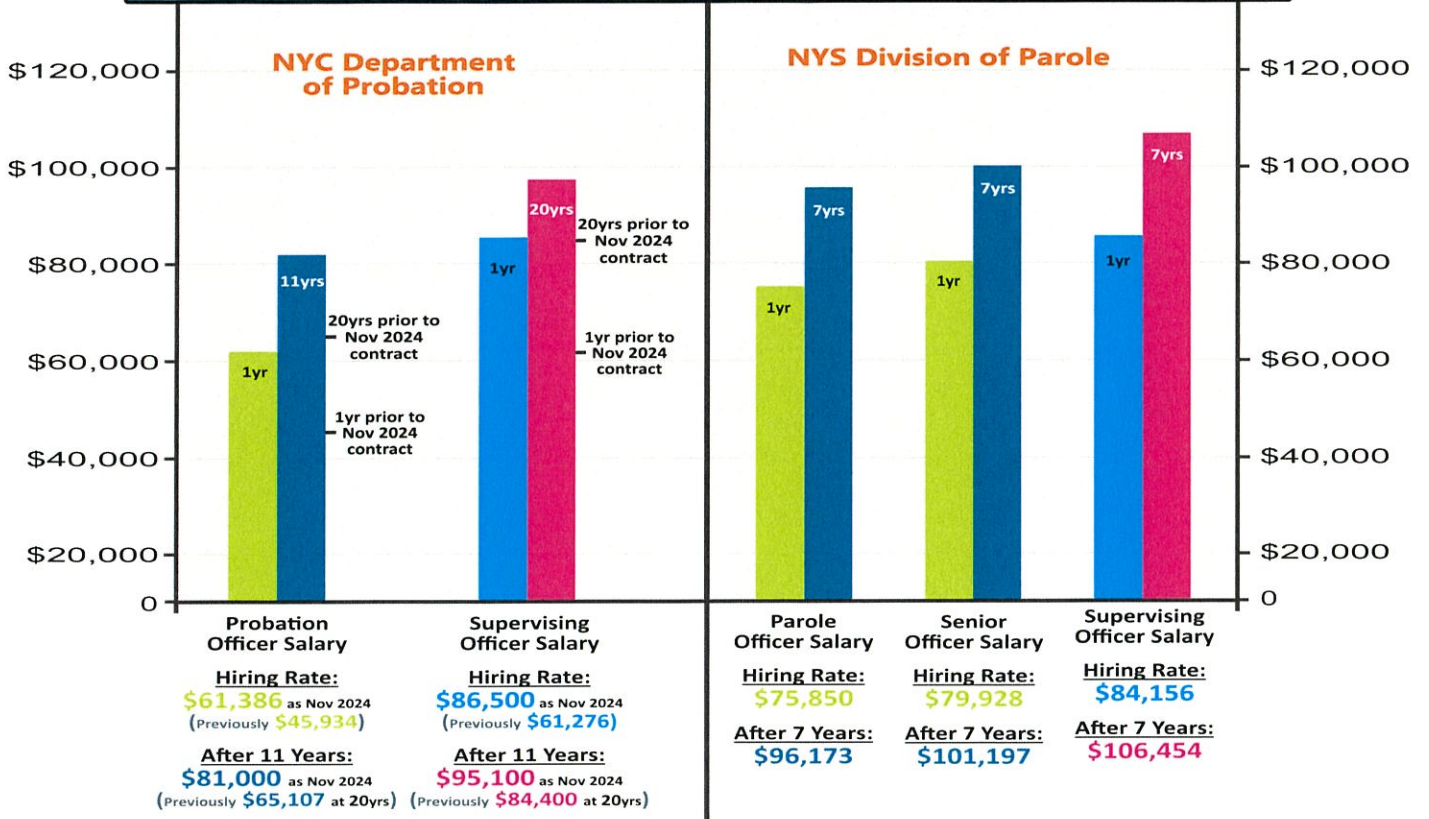


**NYC Police Department
Officer Salary**

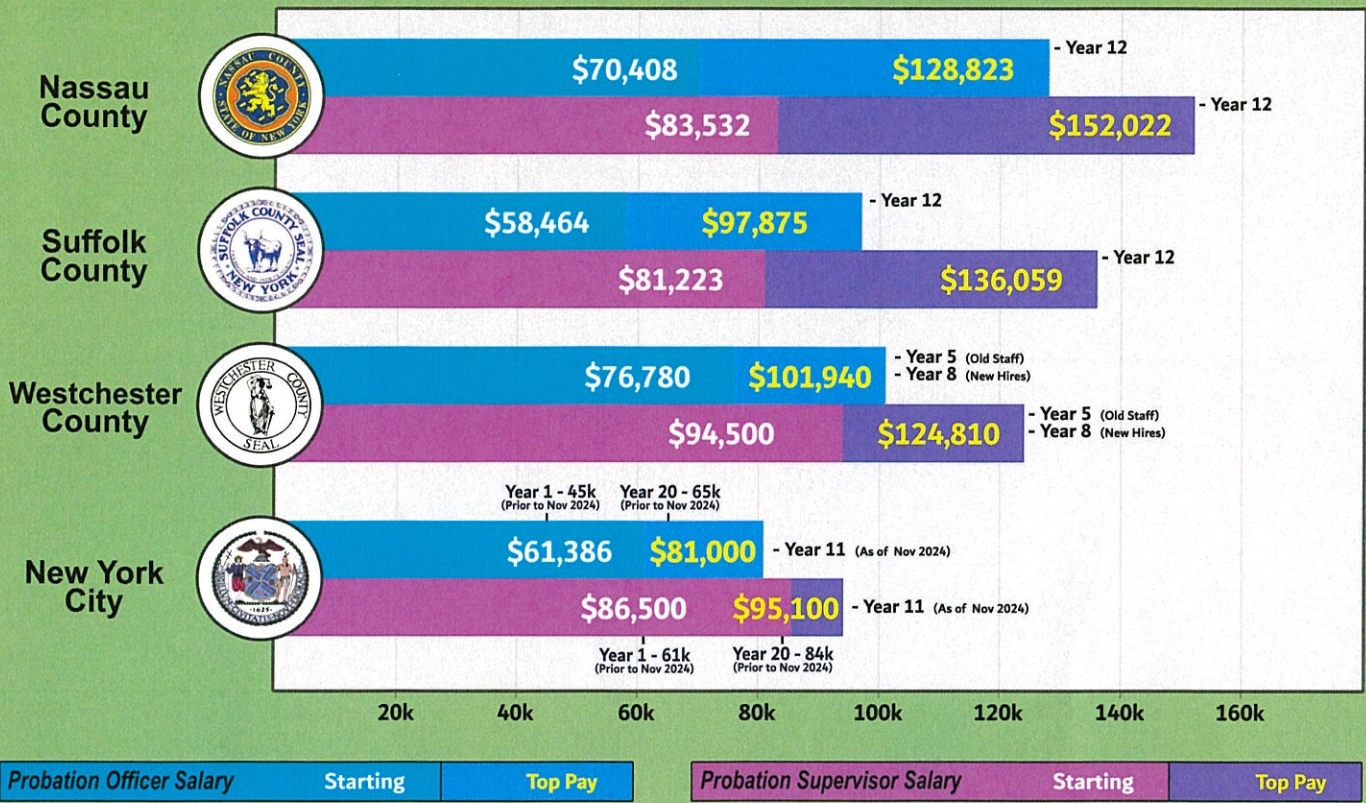
Hiring rate **\$60,884**
At **5.5 years \$126,410**

Pay Comparison

NYC Dept of Probation VS NYS Division of Parole



Probation Pay Comparison Across New York State



Probation Officer Salary Starting Top Pay

Probation Supervisor Salary Starting Top Pay



Mental Health Project

New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice

Preliminary Budget Hearing – Criminal Justice

Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Council Chambers, City Hall, New York, NY

Testimony of
Jennifer J. Parish
Director of Criminal Justice Advocacy
Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project
(646) 602-5644 • jparish@urbanjustice.org

The human rights crisis in New York City jails must end. With the Mamdani administration, new Department of Correction (DOC) leadership, and recently appointed remediation manager, the City has in place leaders committed to ending the brutality, neglect, and chaos that have plagued the city jails for far too long. The city budget should pave the way for achieving the critical reforms needed. Yet, the preliminary budget continues to pour millions of dollars into the Department's budget for uniformed officers rather than investing in the community resources needed to drastically reduce the number of people incarcerated. We urge the Council to support reducing Department of Correction staffing inefficiencies, investing in mental health resources and alternatives to incarceration, developing therapeutic alternatives to solitary confinement, and funding the Board of Correction.

The Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project advocates for people with mental health concerns involved in the criminal legal system. We are deeply familiar with the difficulties people with mental health concerns who are involved in the criminal legal system have in accessing essential mental health services. We represent the *Brad H. Class*, all incarcerated individuals who are assessed as requiring mental health treatment while in NYC jails. Currently 60% of the jail population is enrolled in mental health services, and 23% – more than 1500 people – are diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

Prioritizing Decarceration

The most effective way to address the humanitarian crisis in the NYC jails is through decarceration. Individuals who are diverted from jail to participate in alternative-to-incarceration programs are less likely to be reincarcerated and more likely to achieve stability in the community. Reducing the number of people in custody will not only benefit the individuals who avoid harmful jail conditions, but it will also make operating the jails more manageable. In addition, reducing reliance on incarceration is essential for closing Rikers Island and moving to the planned borough-based jail system.

Immediate action is needed to divert people with serious mental health challenges from NYC jails. It is unconscionable that New York City holds so many people with significant mental health needs in the inhumane conditions of Rikers Island. This environment is detrimental to the health and safety of this population. Even in the units which are supposed to provide the highest level of mental health care, people with mental health concerns can be subjected to a form of solitary confinement, known as deadlocking, at the whim of correction staff.

Continuing to budget for 7,060 positions for uniformed officers is short-sighted given that about half that number of officers will be required to operate the borough-based jails. Moreover, the Department has not been able to fill the 1,300 existing vacancies, and it does not need to do so. The Department has a staffing ratio four times higher than the national average. The Department's "staffing problem" is not about the size of the staff but the failure to manage and supervise staff efficiently. In the court order holding the City in contempt for failing to remedy the constitutional violations that have plagued the jails for decades, the court found the enormous resources the City devotes to the jails are not effectively deployed and described the system as "overstaffed and underserved." Moreover, the Department itself does not know how many staff it actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages. Without a staffing analysis that establishes the need for 7,060 uniformed officers, the Department should eliminate the 1,300 vacant uniformed officer positions.

By eliminating the existing vacancies, the City could save \$174 million a year. Reallocating that funding to community resources, including mental health services and alternatives to incarceration, will enable the City to reduce the jail population and provide people with the supports they need to thrive outside the jails. We urge the Council to support redirecting this funding to the following:

- \$41 million to restore FY26 funding levels for [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) (IMT) teams and an additional \$11 million to fund 8 more teams, each serving 27 people;
- \$4.5 million to restore FY26 funding levels for [Assertive Community Treatment](#) and \$2 million create four more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) (FACT) teams;
- \$1.7 million to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program for 50 to 75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for [transfer to a state hospital](#);

- \$3 million in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds for people with co-occurring serious mental health and substance use concerns;
- \$6 million to restore cuts and add funding for crisis respite centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023, requiring the City to open four more crisis respite centers; and
- \$48.5 million for diversion and reentry services through the Office of Criminal Justice, including:
 - \$1.3 million to restore cuts to Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, and \$3.3 million to restore cuts to Reentry Services;
 - \$10 million in additional funds for ATI programs and \$10 million in additional funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#), to bring these evidence-based models to scale;
 - \$6.89 million to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs; and
 - \$20.3 million to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court involvement and mental health diagnoses.

Ending Solitary Confinement

Despite the enactment of Local Law 42 in 2024, the City continues to subject people in custody to solitary confinement by various means. Local Law 42 prohibits the use of solitary confinement other than deescalation confinement for a maximum of four hours. The law does not simply take away the Department’s power to inflict harmful, dehumanizing isolation upon people in its custody; it requires an alternative response, namely the creation of units in which behavior change is accomplished through meaningful engagement. The provision of quality programming in these units is key. The Department should bring in outside experts with experience designing and implementing effective programming to develop the alternative units required under Local Law 42.

The Council should demand that the Department come into compliance with Local Law 42 as soon as possible and begin developing programming for alternatives to solitary confinement immediately.

Requiring Effective Oversight of the Jails

The Board of Correction has a critical role in ensuring humane conditions and fair treatment of people in DOC custody. However, for the Board to provide effective oversight of the Department, it must have sufficient funding. Currently the Board has approximately 33 staff who are responsible for monitoring jail conditions, conducting investigations, compiling data, publishing reports, conducting rulemaking, and providing other support to Board members.

The Board's Correctional Standards Review Specialists (standards specialists) work in the jails to resolve systemic complaints from incarcerated people and DOC staff. Currently there are about nine standards specialists who are on the ground in DOC facilities. For a system that now incarcerates almost 7,000 people, and has seven open jails on Rikers Island, prison wards at two city hospitals, and courthouse holding cells in all five boroughs, it is plainly inadequate to have so few monitoring staff in the jails. The staff barely has capacity to monitor facilities during regular business hours and certainly cannot provide coverage of the jails in the evenings and weekends when many incidents occur.

Increasing the Board's monitoring staff is needed not only to enhance the Board's capacity to identify issues in the jails but to address them expeditiously. Standards specialists routinely address complaints from people in custody and work with DOC to resolve them in real time. However, without sufficient staff, the vast majority of people in custody do not receive assistance when their basic needs are not met. This issue is especially concerning for people with mental health or developmental disabilities who may not have the capacity to make complaints known to anyone outside the jail. To serve this population, standards specialists need to be in the specialized mental health housing units daily.

One example of the Board staff's critical work was discussed during the February 2026 Board meeting. In December 2025 Board monitoring staff discovered that several people in the Contagious Disease Unit at West Facility were being held in their cells 24 hours a day, deprived of their clothing, and relegated to wearing smocks and diapers. These individuals did not have contagious diseases and were not on suicide watch, yet DOC had detained them in these conditions for weeks, and even up to two months. Correctional Health Services could not have these individuals removed from constant supervision despite their deteriorating mental health. Only through the persistent effort of Board staff did DOC finally remove these individuals from these inhumane conditions.

The Board also has other staff who conduct investigations, gather data, and write reports regarding compliance with the Board's standards and address other important issues in the jails. But they cannot routinely report on all the important aspects that their standards cover. For example, after the standards regarding sexual abuse and sexual harassment took effect in 2017, the Board monitored and reported on them frequently. However, the Board has not issued a report on this topic in more than five years. Also, given the sharp increase in the number of people diagnosed with serious mental illness in the jails, the Board should have examined the provision of mental health treatment and compliance with the Mental Health Minimum Standards, but they have not focused on this important issue.

Ideally the Board would have a budget set at a minimum percentage of the Department of Correction budget. This year the Board of Correction's budget should be increased by at least \$3 million to increase its oversight capacity.

New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice Budget Hearing

Written Testimony of Benjamin Heller
Program Manager, Greater Justice New York
Vera Institute of Justice

March 24, 2026

My name is Benjamin Heller, and I am the program manager of the Greater Justice New York initiative at the Vera Institute of Justice, which works to end mass incarceration, protect immigrants' rights, ensure dignity for people behind bars, and build safe, thriving communities. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

For too long, New York City has overinvested in punitive measures while undervaluing other programs proven to deliver safety. Mayor Mamdani's preliminary budget proposal for fiscal year (FY) 2027 moves the city in the right direction, proposing funding increases for services that help New Yorkers find safety and stability—including homeless outreach, public assistance, and emergency food. But despite revenue shortfalls, the administration is allowing Department of Correction (DOC) overspending to continue at the cost of investments in the services that deliver neighborhood safety, such as community-based mental health services, justice-involved supportive housing, and mental health crisis response.

DOC's overall budget is growing when the system is poised to shrink

The FY2027 preliminary budget allocates \$2.99 billion to DOC—representing a 5 percent increase compared with last June's adopted budget.¹

Eighty-seven percent of DOC's budget relates to personnel costs, meaning any significant reduction in funding must address staffing levels.² The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) authorizes a uniformed headcount of 7,060 officers through the end of FY2030—three years after the city's deadline to close Rikers Island.³ As of January 1, 2026, DOC's payroll has 5,759 uniformed officers.⁴ Filling these 1,301 vacancies would cost the city approximately \$174 million in salaries, fringe benefits, and pension contributions.⁵

Such a massive staffing increase would move DOC in the wrong direction. The agency is poised to downsize when Rikers closes, and the Lippman Commission estimates that the new borough-based jails will only require 3,240 officers.⁶ More practically, the last few years have shown that DOC is unable to hire officers rapidly. Despite slashing entry requirements, condensing training from six months to three, and receiving \$4.2 million in

FY2025 and \$5 million in FY2026 for recruitment, the agency has been unable to hire enough officers to offset attrition: in 2025, 470 officers left DOC while only 445 were hired.⁷ Compared to the average jail in the United States, DOC already employs more than triple the number of corrections officers per incarcerated person. Increasing DOC staffing to 7,060 officers would propel that ratio to more than four times the national average.⁸

According to the federal monitor overseeing DOC, any issues related to staffing stem from mismanagement rather than a lack of personnel.⁹ For example, 109 officers are currently assigned to the vacant Anna M. Kross Center.¹⁰ The agency must address its mismanagement issues—including overtime spending and continued hiring—to better deploy existing officers. Doing so will improve safety within our jails while freeing up city funds for services like mental health treatment and supportive housing, helping reduce the jail population in preparation for Rikers' closure and improving overall community safety.

DOC's overtime budget remains high—and inaccurate

DOC's preliminary overtime budget for FY2027 is \$165.6 million.¹¹ However, based on overtime spending in recent years, that is likely to be a significant underestimate. As of January 1, 2026—just halfway through FY2026—DOC already spent \$174 million (108 percent) of its \$160.8 million overtime budget for the year, significantly higher than any other uniformed agency's overtime spending.¹² If spending in FY2027 resembles the current fiscal year, DOC's budgeted 12-month overtime will last less than six months.¹³

The gulf between DOC's budgeted and actual overtime is both large and consistent across years, raising questions about the accuracy of its overtime predictions. For example, DOC is on track to spend \$626 million on jail operations this fiscal year; using this figure, the FY2027 preliminary budget would represent a 10.7 percent budget increase.¹⁴ In other words, overtime spending has an enormous fiscal impact.

DOC cannot rely on increased hiring alone to reduce overtime spending. Research from the Independent Budget Office found that increased hiring did not consistently lead to reductions in agency overtime.¹⁵ By allowing for persistent underbudgeting, the city enables this mismanagement, which takes money from other services that benefit all New Yorkers.

Recommendations

Reining in DOC spending will enable city leaders to invest more in infrastructure and services that deliver community safety and stability. We urge OMB to reduce DOC's

authorized uniformed headcount this year and in subsequent years to gradually bring staffing in line with the needs of the borough-based jail system. We also urge OMB to introduce new units of appropriation for executive management and programming to improve budget transparency and accountability.

To reduce overtime spending, DOC leadership must deploy existing staff efficiently, reinforce strong oversight that prevents overtime abuse, and submit realistic budgets based on expected overtime spending to which city government can hold the agency accountable.

Based on extensive conversations with city government, advocates, and experts, we also urge the following investments:

- **\$11 million** for eight more Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams and **\$2 million** for four more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams, to scale up community-based mental health treatment and eliminate long waitlists for care;¹⁶
- **\$20.3 million** for 150 units of low-barrier housing, accompanied by a commitment to assess the need for transitional reentry housing and fund additional units accordingly;¹⁷
- **\$1.3 million** for alternatives to incarceration (ATI) and **\$3.3 million** for reentry services to offset slated budget cuts, **\$6.9 million** to expand programs serving court-involved young people with mental health needs, and **\$10 million** in additional ATI funding to scale services up to meet demonstrated need;
- **\$10 million** in additional funding for the Commission on Human Rights, which enables New Yorkers with conviction histories to find community-based stability through housing and employment;
- **\$3 million** in additional funding for the Board of Correction (BOC) to enable the agency to hire staff for rigorous jail oversight; and
- **\$17.5 million** in additional B-HEARD funding to make non-police mental health crisis response available 24 hours a day within its current operating boundaries and include peer specialists, who would bring valuable expertise to response teams.

By investing in these services, the Mamdani administration can follow through on its commitment to shrink the jail population in preparation for the move off Rikers Island, deliver responsive and effective governance, and improve community safety for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please contact me at bheller@vera.org if the Vera Institute of Justice may provide further support.

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- ¹ The budget numbers presented in this brief were provided to Vera by the Independent Budget Office (IBO) in February 2026 and are on file with the author. Vera used data from IBO to have the most up-to-date numbers; for more information, contact Benjamin Heller at bheller@vera.org. Note that all fiscal year (FY) 2027 preliminary and FY2026 adopted departmental totals include fringe benefits, pension contributions, and debt service, which Vera drew from the New York City Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to supplement the IBO figures. See OMB, *The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2027: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2026), 39E, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/perc2-26.pdf>; and OMB, *The City of New York Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2026: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2025), 105E, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt25/erc6-25.pdf>.
- ² To calculate this number, Vera added all personnel costs, fringe benefits, and pension contributions. Then, Vera divided that sum by the entire DOC budget including fringe benefits, pension contributions, and debt service.
- ³ OMB, *Full-Time and Full-Time Equivalent Staffing Levels Fiscal Years 2026-2030* (New York: OMB, 2026), 35, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/feb26-stafflevels.pdf>.
- ⁴ IBO budget data.
- ⁵ First, Vera added personnel costs, fringe benefits, and pension contributions before dividing that sum by personnel costs to calculate that for every \$1 DOC spends on personnel costs, it spends an additional \$1.45 on fringe benefits and pension contributions. Then, Vera multiplied the average starting salary for a corrections officer (\$54,652) by 2.45 to calculate a total cost per officer of \$133,753.91. Finally, Vera multiplied that number by the total number of vacancies (1,301) to calculate the total cost of filling vacancies, which is \$174,016,436. For a corrections officer starting salary, see NYC Department of Correction, “Salary & Benefits,” accessed March 2, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>.
- ⁶ Independent Rikers Commission, *A Path Forward: The Blueprint to Close Rikers* (New York: Independent Rikers Commission, 2025), 67, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/6802a228b5619e3f5bafd0cf/1745003055967/Independent+Rikers+Commission+Blueprint+to+Close+Rikers+Island+March+2025.pdf>.
- ⁷ Graham Rayman, “NYC No Longer Requires College Credit for New Officers at Rikers Island and Other Jails, Correction Commissioner Decides,” *NY Daily News*, April 21, 2023, <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/04/21/nyc-no-longer-requires-college-credit-for-new-officers-at-rikers-island-and-other-jails-correction-commissioner-decides>; Graham Rayman, “NYC Correction Dept. Slashes Academy Training Time for Officers in Half,” *NY Daily News*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/04/17/nyc-correction-dept-slashes-academy-training-time-for-officers-in-half>; and recruitment figures from Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice by Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, March 7, 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doc/media/march-7-2025-testimony.page>. For attrition and hiring data, see Office of the New York City Comptroller, “Department of Correction (DOC),” accessed March 4, 2026, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/department-of-correction-doc/dashboard/>.
- ⁸ As of January 1, 2026, DOC had 5,759 uniformed officers compared to a jail population of 6,776. Uniformed officer headcount from IBO budget data. Jail population from Vera Institute of Justice, “New York Criminal Legal System Data Hub: Jail, NYC,” accessed March 4, 2026, <https://www.vera.org/ny-data-hub/jail>. This ratio equals 1.2 incarcerated people for every officer. In contrast, as of 2023, the average jail in the United States had four incarcerated people for every uniformed officer, as per Zhen Zeng, *Jail Inmates in 2023: Statistical Tables* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2025), Display 20, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/jail-inmates-2023-statistical-tables/web-report>.
- ⁹ Nunez Monitoring Team, *Status Report by the Nunez Independent Monitor* (New York: Nunez Monitoring Team, 2026), 18-24, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/2026-01-13-20th-Monitors-Report.pdf>.

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- ¹⁰ NYC OMB, *Departmental Estimates* (New York: NYC OMB, 2026), 1379, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/de2-26.pdf>.
- ¹¹ IBO budget data.
- ¹² IBO budget data.
- ¹³ IBO budget data.
- ¹⁴ IBO budget data. The FY2026 adopted budget figure for jail operations personnel is \$414 million, but in the city's updated estimates for FY2026 spending, the number rises to \$626.3 million only to fall back to \$427.4 million in the FY2027 preliminary budget, as shared with Vera by IBO.
- ¹⁵ Arden Armbruster, *A Shrinking System with Similar Spending: A Decade of Jail Trends (2014—2023)* (New York: IBO, 2024), 1, <https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/public-safety/2024/a-shrinking-system-with-similar-spending-a-decade-of-jail-trends-2014-2023-september-2024.pdf>.
- ¹⁶ As of March 2025, IMT teams had waitlists of 672 people. See Caroline Lewis, “NYC Council Press Officials to Cut Wait Times for Mobile Mental Health Teams,” *Gothamist*, March 24, 2025, <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-council-press-officials-to-cut-wait-times-for-mobile-mental-health-teams>.
- ¹⁷ In February 2026, the Mamdani administration announced that Just Home would create 58 additional supportive housing units for system-involved people. See New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, “NYC Health Department Releases Updated Request for Proposals to Expand Supportive Housing for Formerly Incarcerated and Homeless New Yorkers,” press release, February 12, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2026/request-for-proposals-to-expand-supportive-housing.page>.



TESTIMONY OF VOLUNTEERS OF LEGAL SERVICE
New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Preliminary Budgetary Hearing
March 24, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Stephanie Taylor, and I serve as Director of the Incarcerated Mothers Law Project at Volunteers of Legal Service, or VOLS. For over 40 years, VOLS has partnered with CBOs and the private bar to provide free civil legal services to New Yorkers who otherwise cannot afford or access representation. Our five core projects serve small business owners, individuals accessing benefits, immigrant young people, incarcerated mothers, and older adults in every borough.

For more than 20 years, the VOLS' Incarcerated Mothers Law Project has helped individuals incarcerated in New York's women's prisons and jails, including the Rose M. Singer Center ("RMSC") on Rikers Island, with their family law needs. Through this work, we regularly meet parents who are trying to maintain relationships with their children while navigating incarceration, family court, and re-entry.

What we see is a crisis that goes unnoticed: the steady erosion of family relationships when parents become involved in the criminal legal system. Structural support for parents before incarceration, during detention, and after release is extremely limited to non-existent. Family court and foster care timelines continue to run while parents are being held in custody, communication with caregivers and children becomes difficult, and guidance about parental rights is scarce. As a result, many parents lose contact with their children or, worse, lose their parental rights all together without ever receiving meaningful legal information or assistance.

At RMSC, our team meets many mothers and parents who come to our legal clinics hoping to understand how to protect their parental rights. But, far too often, the question they ask us is not how to keep their rights; tragically, it's whether there is any way to get them back after they have already been terminated. Generally, the answer is no. We have found that many of these outcomes could have been prevented with earlier access to legal support.

Our legal clinics at women's prisons assist incarcerated parents with family law matters. While these clinics and the great work of institutional legal services providers and social



services organizations such as Hour Children and Osborne Association provide critical support, they are only a small intervention in a much larger systemic problem.

To address this gap, the City should take three key steps: (1) fund programs that provide family law assistance specifically for incarcerated parents; (2) invest more in community-based organizations such as Hour Children and the Osborne Association so they can develop family law advisory services; and (3) ensure that parents receive clear information about their parental rights and family court obligations at sentencing or at the *earliest* stages of custody.

To ensure that VOLS can meet the demand for the aforementioned programs, that incarcerated parents may continue to receive family law assistance and adequate legal representation, and that we may expand our offerings to all vulnerable New Yorkers in need, VOLS respectfully requests **\$100,000 in Speaker's Initiative funding**.

When parents become involved in the criminal legal system, they should not lose the chance to remain part of their children's lives. With earlier support and targeted investment, New York City can take meaningful steps to preserve these vital family connections.

Thank you.

Stephanie Taylor
Pro Bono Director, Incarcerated Mothers Law Project Director
Volunteers of Legal Service



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New York, NY 10002
www.worthrises.org
@worthrises

March 27, 2026

New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
City Hall
City Hall Park, New York, NY 10007

**RE: Testimony presented before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice,
Preliminary Budget Hearing**

Dear Chair Brooks-Power and fellow committee members,

My name is Antonya Jeffrey and I'm the Director of Policy Campaigns and Government Affairs at Worth Rises, a national, non-profit criminal justice organization that works to end the exploitation of incarcerated people and their loved ones. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony urging this committee to include Intro 0096-2026 in its 2027 Criminal Justice Budget.

As a result of local advocacy and the dedication of the Council, in 2018, New York City became the [first jurisdiction in the country to provide free phone calls in its jails](#), resulting in a groundswell of communication, strengthening family connections, improving reentry outcomes, and increasing public safety. Unfortunately, the Department of Corrections (DOC) has jeopardized these key impacts with its extreme surveillance practices.

Working with private telecommunications provider, Securus, the DOC records phone calls made to and from city jails and collects biometric, financial, and other personal information from all participants. Securus then conducts network analyses of this data and packages it to sell to other law enforcement agencies, meaning that the personal data of New Yorkers can circulate forever. Securus' keyword searchable database, THREADS, represents a severe invasion of privacy for the nearly [20,000 people admitted](#) to New York City jails each year, as well as their loved ones in the community. New Yorkers' personal information and intimate conversations should *not* be for sale.

Securus may claim that NYC has special contractual provisions that prevent the sale of this data. We should not be reassured by such claims. Securus does not have a track record of abiding by the law – they have illegally recorded and handed over attorney-client calls and [lied to regulators](#). For example, in April of 2024, New York City public defenders filed a [class action lawsuit](#) against the Department of Corrections in response to the unlawful [recording of over 1,500 privileged calls](#) made from nearly 400 people awaiting trial. Many of these calls were illegally [turned over](#) to prosecutors.

This invasion of privacy is felt acutely by economically vulnerable New Yorkers. City jails house those detained pre-trial, meaning that whether a person and their loved ones are subject to surveillance is entirely dependent on their ability to afford bail. In addition, Black and brown New Yorkers, who are [overrepresented in city jails](#) due to the systemic and discriminatory under

resourcing and [over policing](#) of their communities, are subject to Securus' surveillance at disproportionately high rates.

Given the countless benefits of communication between those who are incarcerated and their support systems, including mitigating feelings of isolation, [improved outcomes for children of incarcerated parents](#) and reductions in [violence](#) and [recidivism](#), phone calls made to and from city jails should be encouraged. However, such surveillance may have a chilling effect on communication, as New Yorkers worry about privacy violations and that the information collected from their phone calls will be used to criminalize them.

In response to the DOC and Securus' unjust surveillance practices, Councilmember Brewer has brought forth [Intro 0096-2026](#), also known as the End Correctional Community Surveillance ("ECCoS") Act. This legislation would ban the recording of phone calls and other digital communications, as well as the collection of biometric and location data without a warrant. This would not be unprecedented – phone calls in city jails were not recorded prior to 2008. Passing this legislation would ensure that all New Yorkers have their basic privacy rights protected, especially at an incredibly vulnerable time when they are fighting their cases. It would also force the destruction of data previously collected and create a private right of action for anyone whose communications are unlawfully surveilled or whose personal information was unlawfully collected, retained, or disclosed.

New York City's annual budget is supposed to be a reflection of the Council's priorities and a reflection of our city's values. Accordingly, we urge the Council to include Intro 0096-2026 in its 2027 Criminal Justice Budget. With this legislation, the Council has a key opportunity to protect constituents' constitutional right to privacy from private corporations and to bring this exploitative, draconian practice to an end.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antonya J". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a stylized "J".

Antonya Jeffrey
Director of Policy Campaigns and Government Affairs
Worth Rises

**Dismantling Racism Team
Congregation Beth Elohim**

274 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, New York 11215

cbedismantlingracismteam@cbebk.org

**Testimony of Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team
New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 24, 2026**

Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team engages in advocacy, in alliance with more directly impacted groups, for reforms of the criminal legal system.

Congregation Beth Elohim is the largest Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, with about 1,300 households.

In Genesis 1:27, we read that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. This foundational text guides us, as a Jewish community, to advocate for policies that will protect people who are incarcerated and treat every individual with dignity.

The FY2027 budget must comply with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers. Mayor Mamdani's Preliminary Budget does not go far enough in making key investments that would promote well-being and reduce incarceration, and in some areas unjustly cuts existing funding. We urge you to work to include in the budget:

1. **An additional \$48.5M for diversion and reentry services through the Office of Criminal Justice (OCJ), including:**
 - a. **\$1.3M** to restore cuts to Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, and **\$3.3M** to restore cuts to Reentry Services.
 - b. **\$10M** for additional funds for ATI programs and **\$10M** in additional funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition to bring these evidence based models to scale.
 - c. **\$6.89M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
 - d. **\$20.3M** to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
 - e. **OCJ should also publish an analysis** of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a proven permanent reentry housing model.

2. **An additional \$3M to increase the Board of Correction's oversight capacity.**
The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 27 more staff roles than they currently have to adequately carry out their oversight responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the Department of Corrections remains over-resourced. With new management in place, the focus should be better deployment of resources, not hiring more staff. The FY2027 budget should:

1. **Eliminate vacant roles for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to right-size the agency.** The Department of Corrections has 7,060 authorized positions for uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2026, they employed 5,759, and 1,301 positions were vacant. Filling these vacancies would cost an estimated additional \$174M annually. Given the administration's stated commitment to reducing incarceration and cutting wasteful spending, these uniformed vacancies should be eliminated.
2. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.
3. **Conduct a staffing analysis before the release of the Executive Budget**, to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate facilities it currently manages.

Thank you for hearing us.

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The intersection of mental health, substance use, and the criminal legal system represents one of the most urgent public health challenges facing our communities today. Data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) shows that nearly 2 in 5 individuals who are incarcerated have a history of mental illness—37% in state and federal prisons and 44% in local jails. Despite this high level of need, the majority of these individuals do not receive adequate care. Approximately 63% of incarcerated individuals with a history of mental illness receive no treatment while in state or federal custody, and fewer than half receive treatment in local jails.

This treatment gap has real consequences. More than one in three individuals in state prisons who have mental health conditions have been incarcerated three or more times. This cycle of incarceration is not simply a criminal justice issue—it is a reflection of systemic failures in access to mental health care and community-based support. As NAMI notes, jails and prisons have effectively become de facto mental health providers, despite being ill-equipped to fulfill this role.

Further compounding this issue, research from the Prison Policy Initiative demonstrates that individuals who have been arrested or incarcerated experience significantly higher rates of substance use disorders compared to the general population. Co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges are common, yet treatment remains fragmented and insufficient both during incarceration and upon reentry.

Each year, thousands of individuals return home from incarceration to New York City communities carrying unmet mental health and substance use needs. Without access to comprehensive, evidence-based care, these individuals face increased risks of relapse, homelessness, hospitalization, and re-arrest. This is not only detrimental to the individual—it destabilizes families and places additional strain on already vulnerable communities.

This is fundamentally a public health issue. If we are committed to building safer, healthier communities, we must invest in robust, accessible mental health and substance use treatment services—both within correctional settings and, critically, in the community upon reentry. Continuity of care, discharge planning, and connection to community-based providers are essential to breaking the cycle of incarceration.

Expanding access to treatment is not only humane—it is effective. When individuals receive appropriate support, they are more likely to achieve stability, maintain housing, gain employment, and avoid future involvement with the criminal legal system.

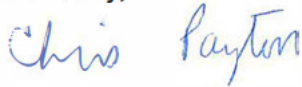
I urge the Council to prioritize policies and funding that:

- Expand access to mental health and substance use treatment during incarceration and after release
- Strengthen reentry services, including case management and care coordination
- Increase investment in community-based behavioral health programs
- Support diversion programs that connect individuals to treatment instead of incarceration

By addressing these gaps, we can reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and promote long-term community well-being.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,




Chris Payton, LCSW, MPA, MPS, CASAC-M, SIFI

Associate Vice President of Behavioral Health

Exodus Transitional Community, Inc.

2271 & 2276 Third Ave.

New York, NY 10035


cpayton@etcny.org

Written Testimony: Committee on Criminal Justice

Tuesday, March 24th, 2026

Dear Committee:

As is the written law of the city, please continue to ensure that the City Budget aligns with the urgent priority of closing Rikers Island and moving forward with Borough Based Jails.

You can do this by allocating an additional 70.6 Million to meet housing and mental health needs of New Yorkers across the city, leading to a safer city for all (which is what we all want). What we know about incarceration is that these systems are not rehabilitative, and instead often cause more harm through the various traumas that individuals witness during their incarceration, not to mention the hardships that they face when returning to the community to unstable living conditions and mental health treatment that often falls short.

24.7 Million can be allocated to create 15 more Intensive Mobile Treatment Teams, the current waitlist is over 400 people to access this evidence based treatment.

7 Million allocated to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams.

6 Million more for four new crisis respite centers across the city

Allocate 6.3 Million to open 250 more residential treatment beds for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.

Increase investments in ATI and Reentry Services. These programs must have increased funding to allow scaling to provide the necessary services to the increasing number of participants that can benefit from these services. I've seen firsthand the impact of Alternative to Incarceration programs, and there are countless people who could benefit from these programs and be home with their loved ones instead of sitting on Rikers Island costing the tax payers and getting further traumatized.

We have the opportunity to begin to address some of the problems that our system has been worsening and profiting from for decades. Its time to put resources into our communities instead of simply removing people from them.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kaake

Senior Director of Healing

Exodus Transitional Community



Freedom
Agenda

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Submitted by Alicia Thomas
March 24, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Council,

My name is Alicia Thomas, and I am a single mother from the Bronx. I am here today as someone who has experienced homelessness and as a member of Freedom Agenda and the Campaign to Close Rikers Island.

There was a time in my life when I was doing everything I could just to survive, trying to keep a roof over my child's head while the system kept pushing me down. My three-year-old son and I were living in a shelter that was not fit for a child. The conditions were unsanitary, and I worried constantly about his health and safety. Every day was about survival with almost no resources.

What I lived through and what I see others going through are not so different from what happens at Rikers. Incarceration does not solve these struggles. It deepens them. Families are separated, children grow up without parents, and people who need housing, healthcare, and mental health support are met with punishment instead.

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety. And yet, the FY2027 Preliminary Budget is missing the very investments that would actually help people before they reach crisis.

We need the City to invest **\$69.2 million in mental health care outside of Rikers**, including restoring and expanding Intensive Mobile Treatment teams to eliminate a waitlist of over 500 people, restoring funding for Assertive Community Treatment and creating more Forensic ACT teams for people returning home, investing in outpatient competency restoration so people are not stuck waiting on Rikers for hospital care, and funding residential treatment beds and crisis respite centers that provide real, community-based care.

We also need **\$48.5 million in diversion and reentry services**, including restoring and expanding Alternatives to Incarceration and reentry programs, expanding services for court-involved youth, and creating at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with mental health needs. Because without housing, there is no stability.

We must also invest **\$3 million in the Board of Correction** so there is real oversight and accountability for what is happening inside these facilities.

At the same time, the Department of Correction is over-resourced. There are over 1,300 vacant officer positions that would cost \$174 million to fill. That money should not be spent. Instead, the City should eliminate those vacancies, reduce overtime, and begin closing facilities on Rikers—starting with ones that are already sitting empty.

I am here today because I was able to rebuild my life with support—housing, childcare, and services. But too many families are still going through what I went through right now.

Closing Rikers is not just about shutting down a jail. It's about choosing to invest in people before they reach crisis. It's about choosing care over punishment.

I urge this Council to fund what actually works—housing, mental health care, and community-based support—and finally make the promise to close Rikers real. Thank you.



Freedom
Agenda

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Submitted by Ashley Davis

March 24, 2026

My name is Ashley Davis, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Freedom Agenda as a member of the Campaign to Close Rikers. I'm also a young New Yorker who has been directly impacted by the criminal legal system. Thankfully, I had the opportunity to participate in an alternative program, where I gained skills, in addition to taking accountability for my actions.

I've also seen the impact of jails on my family, friends and peers. I strongly believe that the city should redistribute the money being used to fund jails and prisons for more beneficial and impactful resources for those who struggle with their mental health. My parents have mental illness, and at times struggle to maintain their mental wellbeing.

Many New Yorkers who face serious mental health challenges are held at Rikers, where they cannot get the treatment they need. In fact, 60% of incarcerated individuals on Rikers face mental health challenges. Even when leaving Rikers, many of these same New Yorkers are released without treatment and housing. At the same time, the City is proposing nearly \$3 billion for DOC, while spending nearly \$486,000 per person each year on Rikers. This system is over-resourced and ineffective. We must eliminate unnecessary vacancies, reduce overtime, and begin closing jails on Rikers.

Everyone should be entitled to have their basic health-related needs met, especially ones involving mental health concerns. New York City can move much closer to doing that by shifting resources from the Department of Correction to programs that improve community well-being and keep people out of jail.

We are urging the City Council to allocate at least \$69.2 million to meet mental health needs, including community-based mental health treatment, in-patient residential treatment, and crisis respite centers.

We are also urging the Council to invest \$48.5 million in diversion and reentry services, including Alternatives to Incarceration, reentry programs, youth mental health services, and at least 150 units of low-barrier housing.

By getting DOC's spending under control, we can finally fund the programs and services our communities have always deserved.

Committee: Criminal Justice Budget Hearing

Date: March 24, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Joseph Soto. I am a Native American spiritualist, but thirty years ago, I was an adolescent trapped in the "gladiator school" of Rikers Island.

Between 1994 and 1997, the violence was so constant that I had to cut my hair short just to survive—to make sure no one could grab it during a fight. It wasn't until December 5th, 1995, when I finally left for state custody, that I was able to grow my hair back. I have kept it long ever since as a symbol of my spirit and my freedom.

Thirty years later, the violence at Rikers remains the same, if not worse. The only thing that has grown is the waste of public money. Today, NYC spends nearly **half a million dollars** to incarcerate just one person for a year. This year alone, the DOC is spending over **\$370 million on overtime**.

We are pouring billions into a system that fails to provide safety or dignity. More than 50% of people on Rikers today have a mental health diagnosis, and hundreds are there simply because they are homeless.

I am here to urge the Council to:

- **Reign in the DOC's inflated budget** and stop the cycle of violence I lived through decades ago.
- **Expand the Board of Correction's (BOC) oversight** to hold this system accountable.
- **Redistribute funds** from DOC into community-based services that foster real safety and well-being (including the mental health and diversion programs the Campaign to Close Rikers is advocating).

The city committed to closing Rikers by 2027. We cannot wait another thirty years. It is time to divest from this failure and reinvest in our people. Thank you.

Testimony to the City Council Committees on Criminal Justice budget hearing
March 24, 2026
Delivered by Tammy Reed, Freedom Agenda

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and committee members. Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today. My name is Tammy Reed, and I am testifying on behalf of Freedom Agenda and as a member of the Campaign to Close Rikers.

I would like to start off by saying that as a taxpaying citizen of this great city, I am blown away by the fact that we are paying almost \$500K per year to house one individual on Rikers Island. I am a senior citizen and live off of less than \$25K per year, with minimal outside assistance and have never missed a meal, have adequate housing, utilities, etc. NYC, surely, we can do better.

I am proposing today that this current budget of **FY 2027** be adjusted to be in line with Rikers' closing. I am requesting that instead of passing this over DOC bloated budget, that the City Council work with the Mayor to reallocate funds to areas where we truly do need the funding, such as mental health services and more vigorous community services, i.e., affordable housing for those with mental health disease and others, just to name a couple.

As a senior citizen, born and raised in this great city, and, yes, NYC is the greatest city in the world, it just baffles me as to why we are continuously dumping money into a facility, Rikers Island, that is an absolute disgrace and stain on our city, instead of addressing the real issues plaguing our city, i.e., mental health, housing, preventative care, meaning funding programs that help our young ones from ever entering the "system".

Recently, I was at an event, where one of the panelists said that there are surveys that correlate failing test scores in schools to number of beds needed in juvie hall. I was flabbergasted by this statement. If you can correlate test scores to juvie hall beds, surely, we can correlate it to the fact that there is a need to fund schools and programs that prevent kids from filling up those juvie beds. There are a host of organizations/programs that are dedicated to this goal. Once such organization is the Family Enrichment Center. They're popping up throughout NYC. I volunteer at one in St. Albans, Jamaica, Queens. As a privy member/parent advisory council, one of the main issues is funding. This is true for most organizations that are already up and running and doing the work. In addition to the funding for mental health care, affordable housing, etc. this is where the money being wasted on Rikers should be spent.

Specifically, I would like to see an additional \$69.2 million to address mental needs, through more Intensive Mobile Treatment teams; more Forensic Assertive Treatment teams; more crisis respite centers, and more in-patient treatment options. I would also like to see \$48.5 million more for diversion and reentry programs, including low-barrier housing, alternative-to-incarceration programs, and programs for court-involved youth with mental health needs. We know that implementing the Close Rikers plan will require serious investments in mental health and in the communities that have been neglected. Let's start now.

I am truly rooting for this city. We can and must do better.

Good afternoon members of the committee, and fellow attendees.

My name is Victor M Herrera and I am long time directly impacted leader and member of Freedom Agenda CloseRikers.

I want to begin with I have experienced the violence that was mostly provoked by staff during controlling factors that the other c's are ignored, Care and Custody. The individuals that are pre-trial detained that are faced with the difficult overwhelming understanding of what they are faced when confronted with the criminal prosecutorial apparatus that is just too tough to overcome. When, as COBA just provided, they are faced with overworked staff, equally stressed for their own shortfalls, whether overtime or staffing shortage, engaging in daily correctional ideologies, the result is harm to both sides, not one sided as implicated by the Union Boss COBA. Detainees are always the best source to blame for the harm they experience.

Statement of Position

I am here today to urge you to **increase funding for specific re-entry programs that serve to prepare pre-trial detained or parolees to return with the necessary information and resources. There is an absence of re-entry prep for individuals to participate when the appropriate needs upon return to the community is vital for those seeking economic and housing oresources. The absence of such information and preparation leaves many at-risk with the current metro card and go idea.**

Core Argument & Evidence

1. Cost-Effectiveness

- For public safety, justice, remedial education, and resources will go a long way for people returning.

Urgency of Need

- These insecurity issues are truly overwhelming and traumatizing. More Social Services are needed while individuals are being held in custody or detained.
- Without increased allocation of funding for such programs, the city is left with underserved people and communities, leaving them open to a negative suggestiveness open to interpretation by other agencies, i.e., NYPD and Probation

Addressing Potential Concerns

I understand that budget resources are limited and that every department is making a case for funding. However, cutting or underfunding prevention programs like the one proposed for people in detention will only cost more. This is not just a moral choice — it's a fiscally responsible one.

Call to Action

I respectfully ask that you allocate **funding toward Reentry programs that will connect people with IMT's, ATI's and housing and financial centers that would assist the transitional needs of the at-risk individuals.** — and with such educational approach our community public safety is a reality.

Closing

Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the people of the City of New York. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Bronx
Browns

BKlyn NY 11222
3/24/2026

My mentally disabled 15 year old was arrested and incarcerated at Riker Island jail from April 8 2025 till February 28 2026.

The circumstances leading to his arrest is a mystery. After constantly coming to court and his case adjourned and his legal process violated by the correctional officers he decided to plea guilty.

However, there is no evidence of him remembering what he is charged with which is second degree attempted murder. Some charges that has been on his personal public records since age 10. Something I believe is from his identity theft, medicare fraud issues on his insurance by someone.

Please I will your committee to look into his case. Every statement he made was coerced or falsely made by the officers who arrested him.

(2)

Also my son being that he has learning disability and scared for his safety he decided to plea guilty. While he was incarcerated at Rikers Island jail he was denied food and at times locked in his cell for 3 days.

Also his ~~arrest~~ ^{arrest} is being used as a scapegoat for those who used his Medicaid ^{insurance} to commit fraud and other crimes.

Please my son was being hide by the state of New York from the public after reporting his identity and SSN benefit stolen by New York Agency for people with disability staffs who were acting as his ^{fake} care givers w. using him as their dependents.

Also he was switched 2 weeks ago from his cell to undisclosed location without notifying him that he will be transferred to Upstate.

CRAP LIKE A KIDNAPPING STY without taking his belongings (clothes, other things).

3

CRD

FOR

Please I will be happy if
you can help the Circumstance
leading to his arrest and how
he moved from Rikers Island
to unknown location.

MY SON HAD NO CRIMINAL
RECORD PRIOR TO
HIS ARREST.

MOM

Jonathan Mang

DOB: 4/3/06

CASE # IND: 71256-25/001

LS

Book & Case Number

349250 (547) Facility

Riker House: RIND C

Arrest Date 4/8/2025

CHARGE: 110-725.25 TB

(Attempted Murder 2nd Degree)

B. February

School

N.B: Special Education Created
Criminal School record that he
is Dangerous & Killer

From: [Katherine McFarland](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Closings Of Rikers island
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:17:17 PM

Dear [Recipient Name],

I am writing to express my strong support for either closing Rikers Island or placing the facility under federal supervision. It is clear that the current environment is unsafe, and I believe a transition to federal oversight would significantly reduce the violence and loss of life that we currently see on the Island.

The federal system offers a safer, more structured environment with essential resources that are currently lacking. I am advocating for the implementation of comprehensive programming for all inmates, including:

- Educational Opportunities: GED classes and computer training.
- Vocational Training: Courses in maintenance, cooking, and job readiness to help individuals support themselves upon release.
- Mental Health and Wellness: On-site doctors for those with mental health issues and self-awareness classes that teach emotional regulation.

By providing these tools for growth and achievement, we allow individuals to build self-esteem and independence. Teaching these skills can help reduce gang involvement by showing our youth that they can become lawyers, doctors, technicians, and chefs. We need to give the next generation something positive to believe in so they can help each other stop the cycle of violence.

Ultimately, we all share the same pain when we lose a loved one. I believe that by changing the rules and regulations under which these facilities operate, we can foster a community of peace and mutual support.

Thank you for your time and for considering these important changes for the future of our community.

Best regards,

Katherine McFarland

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Parish

Address: 40 Rector St., NY, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 24 March 2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Benny Boscio

Address: _____

I represent: Correction Officers' Benevolent Assoc.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexandria Maldonado, Assistant Commissioner

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: BOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathleen Zadzora, Assistant Commissioner

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Doherty, Deputy Commissioner, Facilities

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nell Colon, Deputy Commissioner, Programs

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faizon Zuhair, Assistant Commissioner, Budget

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner, Strategic Operations

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Conroy, General Counsel

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charlton Lemon, Bureau Chief

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sherriann Rembert, Chief of Dept.

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S.

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret (Mag) Egan, First Deputy Commissioner

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stanley Richards, Commissioner

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd S, Queens, NY

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Magaly Mendez

Address: _____

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: 520 8th Ave.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jasmine Georges-Yilla

Address: Executive Director

I represent: NYC Board of Correction

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Cintron Hernandez - General Counsel

Address: 2 Lafayette Street

I represent: NYC Board of Correction

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tiana Betancourt

Address: Deputy Executive Director of Administration

I represent: NYC Board of Correction

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATRINA BLACKMAN ^{ASS'T EXEC DIRECTOR} OF MONITORING

Address: _____

I represent: BOARD OF CORRECTION

Address: 2 LAFAYETTE ST #1221 ^{NY, NY} 10007

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexis Foote

Address: _____

I represent: Rockaway, NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL KLINGER

Address: 177 LIVINGSTON BLK 1201

I represent: BROOKLYN DEFENDERS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-24-26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen J. Adelman

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Bar Association

Address: 42 W. 44th St NY NY

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

RE: DOC

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ZACHARY KATZNELSOHN

Address: 121 6TH AVE NY, NY 10013

I represent: INDEPENDENT RIERS COMMISSION

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BARBARA MANY

Address: [REDACTED] street

I represent: Bklyn NY 11222

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DR Shamica Gambrell

Address: DOP

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 03/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: RAZWAN MIRZA

Address: _____

I represent: DOP

Address: 33 Beaver St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Paul Richards

Address: _____

I represent: DOP

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Joshua Young

Address: _____

I represent: DOP

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

Name: Zenia Melendez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Dept of Probation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-24-26

Name: SHARUN GOODWIN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Dept. of Probation

Address: 33 BEAVER STREET, NY NY/10004

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

Name: Wayne McKenzie (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Department of Probation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JASON TORRES

Address: _____

I represent: DEPT OF PROBATION

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Caputo

Address: _____

I represent: Department of Probation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Eusebio

Address: _____

I represent: Department of Probation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Antonio Pullano

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Department of Probation

Address: 33 Beaver St. New York NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Benjamin Heller

Address: _____

I represent: Vera Institute of Justice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrew Gonzalez

Address: DOP

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tanawah Downing

Address: [REDACTED] Southeast

I represent: self / Public

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dedraunice K Powell

Address: 2510 Westchester Ave

I represent: The United Protection Officers Association

Address: same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melanie Dominguez

Address: _____

I represent: Katal Center for Equity, Health and Justice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Navena Chaitoo Assistant Exec Director
Address: 2 Lafayette St of Research
I represent: Board of Correction
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dejon Williams
Address: 125 Barclay St NY NY 1007
I represent: President, Local 299, DC37
Address: Recreation Therapist at Rikers Island

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Luisa Taveras
Address: _____
I represent: Womens Prison Association
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Reginald Chatman

Address: [Redacted] Amsterdam Ave

I represent: The Fortune Society

Address: 29-76 Northern Blvd, LIC, NY 11109

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JULIA DAVIS

Address: Youth Represent 11 Park Place NY NY 10007

I represent: YOUTH REPRESENT

Address: 29-76 Northern Blvd LIC NY 11109

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0096 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/24/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALICE HAMBLETT

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11238

I represent: Worth Rises

Address: 85 Delancey St. 2nd Floor NY, NY 10002

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-24-26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTOR HERRERA

Address: _____

I represent: FREEDOM AGENDA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-24-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JULIA DAVIS

Address: _____

I represent: YOUTH REPRESENT

Address: (legal services)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-25-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Damon Gilbert

Address: _____

I represent: New York Lawyers For The Public Interest

Address: (legal services)

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-21-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caprice Jenerson

Address: _____

I represent: Office of Appellate Defenders (OAD)

Address: (Legal Services)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-25-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Taylor

Address: _____

I represent: Volunteers of Legal Services (VOLS)

Address: (legal services)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eduardo Rodriguez

Address: [Redacted] Far Rockaway

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: 40 Rector St.

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Damon Gilbert

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11225

I represent: New York League for the Public Interest

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tammy Reed

Address: [Redacted] St. Albans, NY 11412

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: 40 Rector St. NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joseph Soto

Address: Manhattan

I represent: Freedom Agenda and Peer Workforce Coalition

Address: 40 Rector St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darren Mack

Address: Manhattan

I represent: Freedon Agenda

Address: 40 Pector St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda McCarthy

Address: 25 Chapel Street, Brooklyn

I represent: CASES

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vidal Guzman

Address: _____

I represent: America On Trial Inc (AOTI)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan Marsden

Address: _____

I represent: NYC A-EI Coalition

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Taylor

Address: 40 Worth Street Suite 829

I represent: VOLS (Volunteers of Legal Service)

Address: 40 Worth St. NY NY

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