



**Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice  
Testimony to the New York City Council  
Committee on Criminal Justice**

**Oversight: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety**

**February 19, 2026**

Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the council – it's my pleasure to be here today.

I'm Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. I'm joined here by MOCJ Chief of Staff Nora Daniel, and MOCJ Executive Director of Research Innovation Molly Slothower. We are pleased to be with our colleagues, Commissioner Sharun Goodwin of the Department of Probation, and Commissioner Stanley Richards, of the Department of Correction. We are excited to welcome them and look forward to working together as they bring new perspectives to addressing the system's challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our collective and interconnected work to address recidivism.

Let me begin with a simple truth: **Public Health is Public Safety.**

Long-term sustainable public safety requires investing in people by providing them with the individualized treatments and supports they need to thrive.

MOCJ's mission is clear: ensure fairness in the criminal legal system and shrink its footprint by:

- shifting to a restorative approach for justice-involved individuals
- Reducing incarceration and recidivism
- Coordinating swift and fair processes for the entire justice-involved population

**Recidivism & Jail Population**

MOCJ's research helps to direct criminal legal system programming by providing an accurate picture of the overall system.

It's important to orient us in some of the data concerning the current legal system and recidivism rates.

Since 2022, the jail population rose 24% to 6,836. We have to be honest that this census is a concern and we will need to be mindful and carefully monitor with the seasonality of the summer months. Also, given the Borough Based Jails capacity is only 4,000, there is considerable work ahead. These sobering numbers are important to note given that jail population is interlinked with the issue of recidivism.



Since 2022, the one-year felony recidivism rate of all people in the NYC court system remained at 13% citywide. The one-year felony recidivism rate of people who completed their time in Rikers and returned to the community each year outpaced the general court-involved population, going from 30% to 32% during that time.

Length of stay for complex cases and case processing delays have also contributed to the overall increase in jail population.

## **Combating Recidivism**

Addressing recidivism is beyond the ability of any single agency. We all have a role to play. MOCJ currently supports a provider ecosystem of programs including supervised release, alternatives to incarceration, reentry services, and transitional housing.

We invested in alternatives to jail, which – thanks to our amazing nonprofit partners – offer pathways toward stabilization.

The data is clear: most participants do well in existing programming, but significant gaps remain in the system.

While programs and services exist, the current demand for these resources is higher than the programs can serve. For instance, while we have approximately 800 beds available for Transitional Housing, we know the need of people leaving Rikers is far greater.

Continued system improvements require:

- stronger support for program staff well-being
- better access to appropriately matched services
- environments that foster human connection and clinical excellence,

and a deeper recognition within the criminal legal system of the barriers people face and the strengths they possess.

## **Supporting High Needs Populations with Care**

We also want to note that while capacity is an issue, there is also a need for programming and housing that serve the complex needs of the justice involved population. Given that a small number of people – those with the highest needs – represent a disproportionate number of cases in the criminal legal system, we want to ensure that there are robust services and supports specifically for this high-needs population. These are the people with the greatest likelihood of falling through the cracks time and again, and this group currently makes up about 40% of the city's jail population. We are able to see in the data that the people who need the most help are cycling through a strained system.



It's important that we focus on programs and models that prioritize care and support for complex needs.

### **Pilots and Promising Models**

Employing this lens, we piloted some unique models and programs that show promise – prioritizing care and promoting stability for individuals.

#### **ICM**

Together with our contracted partners CJA and CASES, and the support of this body, we introduced interventions such as “Intensive Case Management.”

Known as ICM, this program focuses on intense engagement.

- Case managers do more than make referrals.
- They walk alongside participants.
- They help with services, treatment, housing, and court compliance. They stay engaged, even when progress is uneven.

This program has successfully produced reductions in violent felony recidivism among participants. It's a continuous work-in-progress; our researchers are studying what's working and what isn't, so ICM can continue to evolve into an even stronger solution for the city.

#### **Atlas**

We also developed ATLAS, which now sits under the Department of Youth & Community Development. ATLAS uses data to connect high-risk individuals with tailored services and ongoing support. MOCJ continues to provide quality assurance and technical support to the program. Atlas is voluntary, and the results so far are promising. Even without a court mandate, a majority of participants complete all the therapy sessions.

When people have a safe place to live, access to treatment without barriers, and a path to work, we see that they are far less likely to return to the system.

We are committed to making this a reality for more and more New Yorkers by embedding public health across the criminal legal system. At MOCJ, we are coordinating across agencies, to invest in people with the highest needs, so everyone in New York benefits. This process will take time, but we are all aligned on these objectives and committed to accomplishing them together.

Addressing recidivism will require sustained and focused coordination and care across agencies. I will now hand it off to my colleagues at the Department of Probation and the Department of Correction to provide more detail.

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

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

**February 19, 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 Neil Colón, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Programs and Community Partnerships. I am deeply honored to be here today, and grateful to Mayor Mamdani for the opportunity to serve in this role. My journey—including my own experience of incarceration—has shaped my life’s work, and I am here before you committed to ensuring that this Department reflects hope, transformation, transparency, and accountability.

Let me begin with humility. I have been in this position for just a few days, and I am listening; I am learning; I am meeting with staff and those in our care across all facilities, speaking with partners, reviewing data, and digesting the full scope of the operations and the challenges. While I intend to hit the ground running, it would not be prudent of me to offer or commit to detailed operational changes quite yet. But I can be clear about the direction in which we are headed: we are turning the page, and we are doing so with eyes wide open.

The task before us is not a six-month project. It is not even a one-year project. Transforming a jail system with the size and complexity of New York City's is not like steering a speedboat, it is like turning a cruise ship. It requires steady leadership, disciplined coordination, collaboration, and the patience to move deliberately and sustainably. Once we turn, we must continue forward with consistency and purpose. This work will take time, and I am here to see it through.

My strategic mission rests on four interconnected pillars. First: safe, humane jails. Safety is foundational. Without safety, nothing else works. Safety must extend to correction officers, non-uniformed staff, and the people in our care alike. But safety cannot come at the expense of dignity. I do not believe that a humane environment is in tension with security; I believe it strengthens it. When we center our work on order, fairness, and accountability—and when we refuse to judge people solely by the worst thing that they have ever done—we create conditions where transformation becomes possible.

Second, I am focused on developing and strengthening partnerships. Although the Department of Correction is situated on an island, it does not operate in isolation. Reducing recidivism and violence requires collaboration across a wide array of stakeholders, including City partners like the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), the Department of Probation, Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services, the New York City Public School System, external program providers, faith leaders, community-based organizations, and this Council. It's important to note that this city does not operate in isolation, either. This work relies on strong partnerships with state agencies and organizations that impact who may come into contact with the criminal legal system. Effective reentry planning begins on day one of incarceration, not on

the day of discharge. But we know that, ultimately, the most effective strategy is prevention. We must strengthen the bridges between custody and community so that support begins before incarceration and does not stop at the gate upon release.

Third, I am intent on supporting responsible population reduction and a true continuum of care by leveraging all of our partners. Population reduction is not simply a numerical goal, it is part of creating conditions where programming, counseling, education, substance use services, and reentry planning can function as intended. A true continuum of care means individuals have access to structured programming while in custody and clear pathways to housing, employment, treatment, and community support upon release. We must measure success not by lives locked up, but by lives transformed.

Last but certainly not least, a critical part of my vision for this agency is to prepare the Department for borough-based jails. The transition away from Rikers Island represents a historic shift. Borough-based facilities demand a different model: closer coordination with communities, enhanced focus on services, and new facilities designed with rehabilitation in mind. We must ensure that our workforce, our partnerships, and our infrastructure are aligned with that future. We cannot, however, forget that we are still years away from completing this move, and resources will be needed for those who still live and work on Rikers Island. There are many hardworking and dedicated public servants at this agency that are already engaged in this vision, and I am excited to learn more and to lean in and support and strengthen our contributions to this monumental, city-wide project.

Finally, I would like to touch on the topic of this hearing, because it is an important and personal one. Programming matters. Evidence-based interventions and counseling, educational

services, vocational training, substance use programming, faith-based engagement, and structured discharge planning all play a role in reducing future system involvement. Reentry coordination, discharge planning, and partnerships with community providers are essential components of preparing individuals for a successful return home. As I transitioned into this position, I had an opportunity to reconnect with some familiar members of service and meet some new staff, and I can assure you that there is no group of individuals who want change and improvements more than the women and men who represent New York's Boldest. We have a team within this agency that is highly qualified, that is passionate, that is dedicated to this work—the work of transformation, and I am excited to support them. We know that technology can be used to further enhance community connection, and I intend to explore how to continue to modernize the Department in order to expand access to both services and access to loved ones. Pathways to employment following release must be real, and so we will collaborate closely to our partners to strengthen and support that continuum of care between jail and community. Social services must be accessible, and so I want to make sure the Department's Division of Programs and Community Partnerships is robust and equipped to do the challenging and important work to which they have been drawn—because it is a calling.

But programs alone do not reduce recidivism. Leadership reduces recidivism. Stability reduces recidivism. Hope reduces recidivism. Over the coming weeks and months, I will be reviewing participation rates, service delivery models, staffing structures, and outcomes data. I will speak with program staff, uniformed staff, service providers, and people in custody. I will work closely with partners and stakeholders across the criminal justice system, because this work cannot be done alone. The Department of Correction does not determine who comes into

custody; meaningful progress on recidivism requires that all stakeholders come to the table to provide people with tools to have a better future, with less adverse contact with the justice system. Reform is not only possible, it is essential. But it must be grounded in facts, transparency, collaboration, and a clear-eyed assessment of what works and what needs strengthening.

This will not be easy. There will be setbacks. There will be moments when progress feels incremental. But transformation in large systems is built through consistent, disciplined effort—cruise ships, not speedboats.

To the uniformed and non-uniformed staff of this Department: your safety and professionalism are central to this mission. We cannot build safe jails without you. I know that each of you works long hours to keep our facilities safe and investing in staff morale and well-being must be pillars of our success. Your dedication has the power to change the trajectory of someone's life. To the individuals in our custody and their families: your story is not over. Our responsibility is to create conditions where redemption and successful reentry are possible. And to the Council and the people of New York City: I commit to collaboration, transparency, and sustained effort. We will move forward deliberately. We will measure our progress honestly. And we will stay focused on building a Department that New Yorkers can be proud of, one defined by progress. The road ahead is long, but I am here, and I am committed to this mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

## **Legislation**

Introduction 246 would require the Department to return all unused commissary funds to individuals prior to them leaving custody. The Department shares the Council's goal of ensuring that individuals can access and claim their funds when leaving custody so that those funds are not abandoned. DOC provides several avenues for individuals to collect their institutional funds prior to or during discharge. Individuals can collect up to \$200 in cash immediately upon discharge and can request a check for any remaining funds. Individuals can also collect their funds in the same manner for up to 120 days following discharge at any of the Department's cashier windows. Additionally, individuals can arrange to have their institutional funds transferred to a loved one in the community at any point prior to discharge. Our data shows that the \$200 cash cap does not appear to be the barrier for the vast majority of individuals collecting their funds at discharge. Nearly 70 percent of individuals who do not claim their funds when leaving custody have \$100 or less remaining in their accounts. DOC would like to work with Council on an alternate plan to resolve the longstanding issue of unclaimed commissary funds that addresses the root cause of the issue.



**NYC**  
**PROBATION**

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION**  
**COMMISSIONER SHARUN GOODWIN**  
**COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
**TESTIMONY**

**STATEMENT OF SHARUN GOODWIN  
COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
February 19, 2026**

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee. I am Sharun Goodwin, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation. We are pleased to be with our colleagues, Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and Commissioner Stanley Richards, of the Department of Correction.

I am joined today by General Counsel Wayne McKenzie, Deputy Commissioner Joshua Young, Deputy Commissioner Patricia Williams, Associate Commissioner Antonio Pullano, Senior Director Deldreana Peterkin, Director Tiffany Bell, and Director Paul Richards. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our programming and the direction we are taking under this administration.

The Department of Probation fulfills a dual role, operating at the intersection of law enforcement and social services – ensuring accountability while providing meaningful interventions and support.

At its core, probation is built on a clear belief: people can change.

We believe in community safety and that accountability matters. We also believe that when individuals are given structure, supervision, and the right interventions at the right time, they can stabilize their lives and avoid deeper system involvement.

Our responsibility is not limited to monitoring compliance. It is to reduce recidivism by changing behavior, while establishing stakeholder engagement and strengthening our programming.

Most people placed on probation face significant barriers which can include:

- unemployment,
- housing instability,
- behavioral health needs,

- substance use, and
- trauma.

We are currently assessing how we can collaborate further with our sister agencies, our partners, and the unions.

Supervision alone does not resolve those challenges. If we want safer communities, we must address the underlying risk factors that drive repeat involvement in the justice system.

That is why programming is not an add-on. It is central to our organizational strategy.

While I am new to the Commissioner's role, I am not new to probation. For over 38 years, I have dedicated my career to this field. I understand both the operational challenges and the extraordinary potential of this agency.

Since my return, I have focused on listening and assessing. We are conducting a comprehensive analysis of our programming, staffing, and operations to determine:

- Where we are aligned with evidence-based practices,
- Where there are programming gaps,
- Where creative solutions and collaboration are needed,
- And whether our programs are improving measurable outcomes.

I am committed to grounding our organizational decisions in data and research. That means strengthening our use of cognitive behavioral interventions, structured skill-building, and targeted workforce development programming.

We are currently delivering programming through a combination of in-house initiatives and contracted community-based providers across the five boroughs. These include educational programs, vocational and workforce development opportunities, mentoring through credible messengers, and referrals to behavioral health services.

We are expanding our existing programs. For example, we are evaluating the development of a NeON Academy model within our existing NeON sites to expand access to skilled trades, certifications, and structured workforce pathways tied to real skills and real jobs.

In addition, we are working to reestablish NeON stakeholder groups to ensure community members and local partners have a voice and a seat at the table to inform programming priorities.

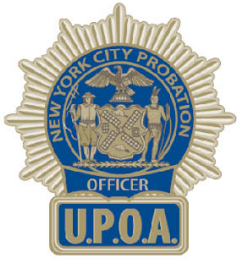
Public safety outcomes improve when the communities are engaged partners. Our community stakeholder groups build connections, and most importantly, trust.

Furthermore, we are evaluating ways to expand our behavioral health programming to ensure that our clients and their families receive the supportive services they need to achieve sustainable outcomes. These are just a few of the many ideas we will be working on to bring to our city.

A client's time with probation is a critical opportunity for redirection through balancing accountability with access to services that support positive change.

Through continued assessment, collaboration and investment in evidence-based programming, the Department of Probation is working to ensure that individuals under supervision are provided with meaningful opportunities to succeed and that the communities we serve are safer and stronger.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I welcome your questions, your insights, and your continued partnership.



## UNITED PROBATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

2510 Westchester Ave., Suite 207 • Bronx, NY 10461 • P: 212.274.9950 • F: 917.398.1640 • [www.upoa.com](http://www.upoa.com)

### **Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice**

Oversight Hearing – February 19, 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 serve as President of the United Probation Officers Association. UPOA represents approximately 600 Supervising Probation Officers, Probation Officers, Probation Officer Trainees, and Probation Officer Assistants working in the New York City Department of Probation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the vital role Probation plays in preventing recidivism and promoting public health and safety in our city.

### **The Vital Role of Probation Officers**

Probation is one of the most important—and often least understood—components of the criminal justice system. Every day, Probation Officers stand at the intersection of accountability and opportunity. We are peace officers, trained alongside our colleagues in law enforcement, authorized to make arrests and carry out enforcement duties when necessary. But our role goes far beyond enforcement.

We supervise individuals who have been sentenced by the courts to remain in the community under strict conditions. We conduct investigations that inform judicial decisions. We monitor compliance, respond to violations, and ensure court mandates are followed. At the same time, we connect people to services—mental health treatment, substance use counseling, employment programs, educational opportunities, housing resources—so they can stabilize their lives and avoid further involvement in the justice system.

In short, we keep communities safe while giving people a second chance.

Research consistently shows that effective community supervision reduces recidivism. When caseloads are manageable and officers are supported with proper training and

resources, Probation becomes one of the most cost-effective and impactful public safety tools available. We reduce jail populations, ease the burden on courts and correctional facilities, and help individuals become productive members of their communities.

Our members are predominantly women and people of color—many from the very communities they serve. They understand the neighborhoods, the challenges, and the systemic barriers our clients face. They do this work not simply as a job, but as a calling rooted in public service.

Probation is not “soft” on crime. It is smart on public safety. It is structured supervision, evidence-based intervention, and meaningful accountability—all delivered in the community where change must ultimately take place.

### **The Struggles Facing the Department**

Unfortunately, the Department of Probation has faced significant challenges in recent years that have undermined its effectiveness.

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.

In some assignments, officers are managing caseloads that far exceed best-practice standards. Family Court officers may carry more than 40 cases. In certain adult supervision units, caseloads can exceed 100 individuals. That is not sustainable—and it is not conducive to meaningful supervision.

When officers are overburdened, they have less time for field visits, home checks, employer contacts, and individualized case planning. They have less time to build relationships that are essential to behavior change. They are forced into a reactive posture rather than a proactive one.



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At the same time, we have seen stalled promotions, canceled or delayed academies, and limited pathways for career advancement. Morale has suffered. Experienced officers—those with invaluable institutional knowledge, have walked out the door.

Operational decisions have, at times, prioritized cosmetic changes over core needs: staffing, caseload reduction, safe working conditions, functioning vehicles, workable schedules, and administrative support. Members have faced involuntary transfers, rising disciplinary pressures, and limited work-life balance.

All of this affects not only our workforce, but public safety. A probation department in crisis cannot operate at its full potential. And New Yorkers deserve a probation system that is strong, stable, and fully staffed.

### **A New Chapter and a Path Forward**

We now have an opportunity to turn the page.

We congratulate Commissioner Sharun Goodwin on her appointment and recognize that she brings decades of experience within this department. We joined the agency together in 1987, and I am confident that she understands the evolution of probation in New York City and the realities our officers face every day.

UPOA stands ready to work collaboratively with Commissioner Goodwin and her leadership team to rebuild and strengthen this department. We believe the path forward must include:

- Aggressive hiring from active civil service lists and consistent academy classes;
- Meaningful retention strategies to stem attrition;
- Reasonable caseload standards aligned with evidence-based practices;
- Clear career pathways and promotional opportunities;

- Investment in training, technology, and safe working conditions; and
- A renewed labor-management partnership grounded in mutual respect.
- Balanced family work life schedules.

Our members want to do their jobs well. They want to mentor, guide, and hold people accountable. They want to protect victims, support families, and reduce reoffending. They want to feel valued and supported in return.

Probation is uniquely positioned to advance both public safety and public health. Many of the individuals we supervise struggle with trauma, mental illness, substance use disorders, unemployment, and housing instability. Addressing those challenges through structured supervision and coordinated services improves outcomes not only for the individual, but for entire communities.

When Probation works, communities are safer. Recidivism drops. Families are strengthened. Taxpayer dollars are used more effectively. And individuals are given a genuine opportunity to rebuild their lives.

This Council's oversight and support are critical to ensuring that the Department of Probation can fulfill its mission. With strong leadership, proper staffing, and a renewed commitment to evidence-based practices, we can restore stability to this agency and reinforce its role as a cornerstone of New York City's public safety strategy.

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



Testimony of

**Maria Colosi**

Re-entry Advocate and Grant Manager  
New York County Defender Services

Before the

City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Oversight - Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety

February 19, 2025

Thank you Chair Brooks-Powers and the Committee on Criminal Justice for holding this hearing to address programming to prevent recidivism and promote public health and safety. My name is Maria Colosi and I am the Re-entry Advocate and Grant Manager of the Re-entry Unit 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. Our Re-entry Unit is comprised of social workers, justice peers, and advocates who specialize both in the carceral facilities where our clients are held, and the community-based services that these individuals will need to rebuild their lives once they are released from incarceration. This elite team works together to support our clients' transition back into our communities, and is funded in no small part by a generous grant from the NYC Council Speaker's Initiative for Discharge Planning.

I. Background:

Reentry support is one of the most critical, and under-resourced, components of the criminal legal system. Each year, thousands of New Yorkers are discharged from our local jails, and return to our communities after periods of incarceration that have disrupted employment, housing, medical care, and family stability. How the City prepares and supports people for release, and what barriers it removes or reinforces at the moment of reentry, has direct consequences for public health, community safety, and long-term recidivism outcomes.

The period immediately following release is one of the most destabilizing and high-risk moments for an individual, and without meaningful reentry support, individuals face significant barriers that increase the likelihood of reincarceration. Recognizing this critical lapse in services, several years ago, our office began to extend the scope of our advocacy to our clients after their sentencing, and provide re-entry support to those emerging from incarceration. Our Re-Entry team endeavors to stop the cycle of arrest and incarceration, prevent future crimes or parole violations, and strengthen communities. Our work is funded in no small part through a generous grant from the NYC Council Speaker's Initiative for Discharge Planning but we urge our city leaders to make this funding a fixed portion of the public defender portfolio.

## II. Importance of Reentry Services

Reentry programming must also be understood as a public safety strategy. When individuals are supported in meeting their basic needs, complying with supervision requirements and accessing services, they are far less likely to return to custody. Conversely, when reentry services are underfunded, delayed, or unavailable, it increases the risk of technical violations, re-arrest, or further destabilization. Despite its importance, reentry programming remains severely underfunded and vulnerable to cuts. Sustained investment in reentry is one of the most effective ways to reduce recidivism, support community stability, and ensure that individuals leaving custody have a genuine opportunity to succeed.

### A. Funding public defender offices to provide reentry services is critical to advancing public safety

Traditionally, public defense work ends at sentencing, leaving clients adrift once their trial-level case is closed. At NYCDS, we believe public defender offices are uniquely positioned to provide not only legal representation, but consistent advocacy post-conviction.

Our office already knows our clients. We already know their needs, their histories, and their families. And we know the difficulties they face while incarcerated and post-release. Our reentry team leverages the knowledge of our social workers and trial attorneys to start building a relationship with a client as early as sentencing. While our clients are incarcerated, the re-entry team meets with them regularly. We speak with them about their goals, get to know their loved ones, and create a plan with them that we then help them execute. We often put in program referrals and coordinate with outside providers while our clients are still incarcerated. When our clients come home, a peer advocate meets them at the bus stop or in the community, ready with a cell phone and transportation. Our team is there physically to walk through the first days post-release with our clients – escort them to parole, take them to programs, and to be a support for them. The week our clients reenter the community after being in custody is often the most

critical and overwhelming. Our clients are often relieved to have a friendly face there to walk through this time with them, particularly because our team members have been through it themselves.

Ultimately, our reentry work is grounded in a continuity of care model, which recognizes reentry as a process rather than a single event. Effective reentry begins well before release and must continue afterwards in a coordinated and intentional way. This continuity of care model emphasizes individualized planning developed with client input, and with support delivered by staff, including peer specialists whose lived experience allows them to understand the structural and practical barriers clients face. We believe public defender offices are uniquely positioned to provide not only legal representation, but consistent advocacy and reentry support post-conviction.

#### B. Proposed Legislation

[Int. 0246-2026](#) (Hudson): In relation to returning funds remaining in commissary accounts when incarcerated individuals are released from custody

**NYCDS supports this legislation.** Access to one's own funds at the moment of release can meaningfully reduce instability during an already vulnerable transition period. Individuals leaving custody often do so with little to no resources. Having immediate access to one's own personal funds can make the difference between being able to secure transportation, food, or basic necessities.

While we strongly support the intent of this bill, we respectfully raise several implementation questions that are critical to ensuring the policy operates as intended and does not create unintended barriers or delays.

First, clarity is needed regarding when and how funds will be issued. Any delays in issuing funds risks undermining the purpose of the legislation, as even short delays can have outsized consequences during the immediate post-release period. Additionally, safeguards should be put in place to ensure that the process of returning commissary funds does not delay release itself or create administrative bottlenecks that prolong custody.

Second, the bill currently contemplates returning funds in cash. While cash may be appropriate in some circumstances, individuals should also have the option to receive funds by check or another preferred secure method. Offering choices can increase safety, by reducing the risk of loss or theft.

Lastly, we are seeking clarification on how this process would operate for individuals transferring from DOC custody to state custody. It is essential to understand whether the transfer

of commissary funds would be automatic in such cases or whether a separate process would apply. Clear procedures are needed to ensure that individuals do not lose access to their funds while transferring custody.

The proposed legislation advances an important and commonsense idea: people should leave custody with access to their own money to support their immediate needs. It is concerning that, absent this legislation, individuals may be released from custody without immediate access to their own funds.

### III. Programming while in custody

There is not nearly enough programming being offered to people in custody on Rikers Island. Educational, vocational, and behavioral health programs are proven to create humane conditions and reduce recidivism in the long run. Yet, the majority of people in custody are denied meaningful access to the educational, vocational, therapeutic, and socio-emotional programs that would keep them safe, improve mental health, help them grow, and prepare them for successful reentry. This is not an isolated issue but a systemic failure that has persisted despite clear legal standards and repeated warnings from oversight bodies.

The Board of Correction's Minimum Standards clearly require at least five hours per day of programming.<sup>1</sup> But that requirement is not being met. When DOC leadership was asked point blank by the previous Criminal Justice Committee Chair, Sandy Nurse, if they were complying with this requirement, their response was strikingly "No."<sup>2</sup> There was no way around it. They were clearly failing to meet their programming obligations.

These issues were significantly compounded when, in 2023, the City eliminated around \$17 million in contracts with nonprofit organizations that had long provided services, including education, counseling, substance use support, and reentry programming.<sup>3</sup> At the time, the DOC asserted that it could absorb these services internally. However, in practice, participation in programming declined sharply,<sup>4</sup> and as said above, DOC leadership acknowledged that they were unable to meet minimum programming requirements once nonprofit providers were removed.

Programming, despite being a small fraction of the DOC's overall budget, was among the first areas to be cut, even though it is perhaps one of the most effective investments for reducing recidivism and improving public safety at DOC's disposal. While it is encouraging that nonprofit

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<sup>1</sup> Minimum Standards § 9-110

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Kaye, *Jail programming suffers a year after DOC cut nonprofit contract*, Queens Eagle (May 20, 2024) at <https://queenseagle.com/all/2024/5/20/jail-programming-suffers-a-year-after-doc-cut-nonprofit-contract>.

<sup>3</sup> *NYC poised to cut \$17 million in community reentry programs*, Fortune Society [https://fortunesociety.org/media\\_center/nyc-poised-to-cut-17-million-in-community-provided-reentry-programs/](https://fortunesociety.org/media_center/nyc-poised-to-cut-17-million-in-community-provided-reentry-programs/)

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* referencing the Mayor's Management Report.

programming is now returning following new contracts, and we are thankful to the new Commissioner and administration for restoring these critical services, the experience of the last two years, including a consistent jail population rise, demonstrates why programming must never again be treated as expendable.<sup>5</sup> They should be treated and protected as essential infrastructure for safety, stability, and successful reentry.

As we move forward, there are still some basic questions that remain unanswered: What programs are being offered? How long are the waitlists? Who is eligible to participate? Which programs are available at each facility, including those such as the West Facility where access has historically been non-existent? And critically, what portion of these services is provided by outside nonprofit partners versus internal DOC staff? Without answers to these questions, it becomes impossible to assess whether programming is sufficient, effective, or lawfully adhering to the Board's Minimum Standards.

Meaningful programming is central to rehabilitation and public safety. It reduces idleness, improves mental health outcomes, strengthens reentry preparation, and lowers the likelihood that individuals will cycle back into custody. Restoring and protecting them affirms a commitment to dignity and public safety.

#### IV. Conclusion

Reentry services are a critical component of any system that claims to prioritize public safety, dignity, and successful outcomes. Individuals leaving custody often do so without stable housing, identification, healthcare, or access to benefits, while simultaneously being expected to comply with onerous and confusing parole conditions, court obligations, and supervision requirements. These requirements are frequently imposed without adequate support, creating conditions where even minor setbacks can result in serious consequences. Reentry services address these challenges by providing stabilization and continuity at a moment when support is most urgently needed.

We fundamentally believe that providing adequate support during this process enhances public safety. That is why the grant funded by the New York City Council, along with a 3-year federal grant is so critical; it allows us to engage with clients at the point of release, provide immediate support, and develop individualized reentry plans that reflect each client's needs and goals. We are, therefore, able to have staff be present when a client is released, escort clients to required parole or court appointments, and to help secure critical resources.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacob Kaye, *After controversial cuts and fallout city taps nonprofits to resume services at Rikers*, Queens Eagle (Feb. 2, 2026) <https://queenseagle.com/all/2026/1/30/after-program-cuts-and-fallout-city-taps-nonprofits-to-resume-services-at-rikers>.

In a year when the city will be issuing a new RFP for public defense, we urge the Council and Mayor to go beyond its traditional funding platform and invest in re-entry programs through the public defender offices. This funding will not only ensure that the current jail population is reduced to meet the City's commitment to close Riker's Island but also work to make sure that it does not increase in future years.

If you have any questions about my testimony, please email [policy@nycds.org](mailto:policy@nycds.org).



**Brooklyn Defender Services**  
177 Livingston St, 7<sup>th</sup> Fl  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel (718) 254-0700  
Fax (347) 457-5194  
info@bds.org

**TESTIMONY OF:**

**Michael Klinger, Jail Services Attorney**

**BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES**

**Presented before**

**The New York City Council  
Committees on Criminal Justice**

**Oversight Hearing on  
Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety**

**February 19, 2026**

My name is Michael Klinger, and I am a Senior Jail Services Attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. We want to thank the Committee on Criminal Justice and Chair Brooks-Powers for inviting us to testify today about programming in the New York City jails.

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 in July of 2025. We represent over 40,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing the removal of their children, or 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 additional services for the people we represent, 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.

BDS works to address the urgent civil rights and conditions of confinement issues for the people we represent who are incarcerated. We work to secure access to essential medical and mental health treatment, educational services and programming and to ensure the safety of those we represent. We do this through individual administrative advocacy, participation in Board of Corrections hearings and numerous working groups. We also monitor and document the conditions inside jails and amplify the experiences of those incarcerated to advocate for systemic change.

**DEFEND • ADVOCATE • CHANGE**

## Background

As advocates for people held in the custody of the Department of Correction (“the Department”), we recognize that access to meaningful programming, which includes education, recreation, therapeutic, and reentry services, contributes to improved outcomes for people both during confinement and upon reentry. In 2023, the Adams Administration cut \$17 million in funding to non-profit organizations providing programs inside the city’s jails, abruptly ending all available courses and therapeutic programs at the end of June 2023. The impact of these cuts was felt immediately by the people we represent. It meant the elimination of critical programs and classes including therapy, educational and job training classes, and anger management. While some providers were able to return to the jails to provide *unfunded* programming,<sup>1</sup> the amount and variety of programming suffered. The Mayor’s Management Report from 2025 indicates that only 15 percent of people in custody participated in any programs, services, or activities.<sup>2</sup> We are encouraged by the recent reports that the city has now restored \$14 million in funding for programming by outside providers.<sup>3</sup> The benefits of regular access to programs led by non-governmental organizations cannot be overstated. In addition to offering people in custody the opportunity to grow existing skills and learn new ones, build relationships with providers, and interact positively with others, such programs also help people build meaningful connections to their broader community. After leaving Rikers, people may have ongoing relationships with community-based organizations that offer a continuum of care.

That continuum of care can last for years after people return home. Recently, one of our social workers received a call from a client with whom she worked almost eight years ago. While he was detained at RNDC as a youth, he eagerly participated in every program that the Department offered him. He is 26 years old now, and he is looking for work in Brooklyn. He called to ask for copies of the certificates he earned while in custody, knowing that these certifications and licenses would aid in his employability in the community. Among them: a food handlers license and other food preparation course completion certificates, an automotive and mechanic certification, an OSHA 30 completion certificate, and various interpersonal skills course certificates. After eight years, these programs may still play an important role in his successes as he returns home.

When the Department cut funding for outside programming in the jails, it sought to replace at least some of the externally-provided programming with “in-sourcing” by Department staff.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

<sup>2</sup> Mayor’s Office of Operations, *Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report*, Jan. 2025, [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/2025\\_mmr.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/2025_mmr.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> 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>.

<sup>4</sup> See New York City Department of Correction Annual Programs Report, Calendar Year 2023. Available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/LL%20122%20CY23%20Programs%20Report.pdf>.

important ways, as we learned from the people we represent in Department custody, this effort was not successful; in-sourced programming lacked the expertise, professionalism, and cultural competency that previously defined the work of outside contracted programs.<sup>5</sup> Investing in means-tested programming inside jails is essential because it ensures that people have access to evidence-based interventions that will support them in their reentry into the community.

## Ensuring access to programming

Programming at Rikers is offered inside housing units, on Department-issued electronic tablets, and in some shared spaces outside of housing units. For programs in the latter category such as hair and make-up, barista, and commercial driving license classes which require people to leave their housing unit, the Department requires an escort. This requirement is often enough to prevent people from participating in their programs. We routinely hear that the Department does not have staff available to escort people – to clinic appointments, hospital visits, recreation or the gym – and sometimes to the kind of programming that people look forward to as a way to leave the housing unit. The Department must find a way to make sure the need for escorts does not undermine the purpose of programming.

Even where programming is offered inside a housing unit, the Department often struggles to ensure that program staff can attend, either because they, too, require an escort, or for any number of other logistical or scheduling reasons. The people we represent often express eager anticipation for certain program staff visits, particularly around creative arts. When those visits fail to take place on the scheduled day and time, there is rarely any explanation for the people in the housing unit. We hear from people that they feel they have been forgotten. The Department must create realistic schedules and systems that allow program staff to keep consistent and predictable routines, and in the event those schedules may be interrupted by the unpredictability of jail realities, the Department must do a much better job of providing information to the people who are most impacted.

## Access to Education

Young people on Rikers Island have a right to educational services through the school year in which they turn 21,<sup>6</sup> and should be enrolled in school within 10 days of requesting educational services. Nevertheless, school-aged youth on Rikers continually struggle to access educational

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<sup>5</sup> The Department eventually testified that plans to fully take over the various roles held by outside program staff were never realized -- an admission borne out by the Mayor's Preliminary Management Report. See Reuven Blau. "Rikers Now Looks to Bring Back Nonprofits After Kicking Them Off Island," *The City*, March 7, 2025. Available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/03/07/rikers-to-bring-back-nonprofits/>. See also, Mayor's Office of Operations, *Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report*, Jan. 2025, p. 69, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2024/doc.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., New York City Board of Correction. "Young Adult Frequently Asked Questions: What is the Handberry litigation?" NYC Board of Correction, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/boc/jail-regulations/education.page>.

services.<sup>7</sup> For years, young people have reported to our staff that they were not aware education services were available on Rikers Island, were not told of their eligibility for school, were not brought to school after enrolling, were inconsistently escorted to school, or were not permitted to enroll in school at all.

The majority of young people on Rikers are housed in RNDC. While the Department testified today that all young people at RNDC are able to attend school, we continue to hear from young people we represent that they must be in a “schoolhouse” in order to consistently have access to educational programming. The Department’s testimony today conceded that there are times when young people who may be entitled to school access simply cannot have it: some youth are placed in facilities on Rikers Island that do not have school services available to them, others are housed in facilities that do have educational services, but are not being housed in one of the units where people are permitted to attend school. Some people we represent who are held in such a “non-program unit” have remained in place despite requesting to transfer into a program unit or are not moved for a long period of time. Others are faced with the difficult decision of transferring into a new, unknown (and possibly less safe) unit in order to attend school, or stay in more familiar surroundings where they are prevented from going to school.

We have also heard from many of our clients who are over the age of 21 and want to access school services but have been unable to do so because Rikers has not consistently made educational services available to adult learners. Like their younger counterparts, many of our older clients did not have the opportunity to graduate high school and are eager to have access to educational services to help further their learning and improve their career prospects after their release. Our office has frequently reached out to the Department to ask that our older clients be able to attend educational services but has been told that these services are not available to adult learners. Other young people we work with have been disenrolled from school upon completing the school year in which they turn 21, stalling their progress towards obtaining their GED.

The people we serve on Rikers frequently report that they want to use their time in custody to further their education but that the Department, in each of the ways described above, is preventing them from doing so. Coupled with the cuts to programming on Rikers Island, the people we represent are increasingly spending vast amounts of time in custody with nothing productive to do. The Department of Education and Department of Correction must work together to create a plan to provide regular in-person instruction for students in city jails, and expand the availability of educational services to adult learners. All young people at Rikers who wish to attend school educational courses must be able to do so, including students placed in restrictive housing units.

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<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Michael Elsen-Rooney. “Young adults at Rikers say they’re systematically blocked from school,” Chalkbeat New York, April 4, 2024. Available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/boc/jail-regulations/education.page>.



## **Conclusion**

Thank you to this Committee for holding this important hearing today and your commitment to ensuring people in custody have access to meaningful programming. With this new administration, new Department leadership under Commissioner Richards and First Deputy Commissioner Egan, and the critical partnership with Nunez remediation manager Nicholas Deml, we hope the city will meaningfully foreground the humanity of the people the city holds in its jails and create conditions needed to successfully reduce the population, close the facilities on Rikers Island, and create a safer and more just city for all New Yorkers. We urge the Council to continue to invest in programs in the city while working to decarcerate and reduce the jail population.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to contact me at [mklinger@bds.org](mailto:mklinger@bds.org).



**TESTIMONY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDER SERVICE OF HARLEM**

**before the**

**Committee on Criminal Justice**

**IN RELATION TO**

**Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Safety**

**and**

**Intro 0246-2026**

**by**

**Elizabeth Bender**

**Senior Policy Counsel, Criminal Defense Practice**

**February 20, 2026**

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers:

I am Elizabeth Bender, Senior Policy Counsel with the Criminal Defense Practice at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS). NDS is a community-based public defender office that provides high-quality legal services to residents of Northern Manhattan. Each year, our attorneys represent nearly 8,000 clients in New York County’s criminal, housing, and family court systems, and in federal immigration courts. Our social workers and advocates support clients by providing referrals to services, connections to benefits, and support throughout their legal cases.

## **I. Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Safety in City Jails**

NDS thanks the Committee for investigating the programming available to our clients who are held in our City’s jails. We have repeatedly objected to programming cuts at Rikers Island because we know how those cuts negatively impact our clients. Currently, our clients report that the programming landscape at Rikers Island is uneven and unreliable: for example, while some at RNDC have regular access to art therapy, those at OBCC experience lockdowns so frequently that any available programming is functionally inaccessible. Those clients who can access programming report important benefits. Many of them feel that it helps them manage anxiety, and that the change of pace and scenery helps alleviate the constant tension that defines our City jails. These benefits undoubtedly improve the experience of Department of Correction staff as well. But these benefits are far too unevenly and unpredictably available to our clients.

This landscape owes in large part to the violence and neglect that are endemic to Rikers Island—issues we know this Council continues to work hard to address. Frequent lockdowns happen because of frequent violence. Correction officers are unavailable to escort people to programs if they are called to address emergencies. They are even less available when the complex is chronically understaffed. In other words, the lack of meaningful programming and the Department of Correction’s inability to maintain a safe environment at Rikers Island are inextricably linked. For this reason, we believe that relying on the Department to help prevent recidivism—through programming or any other means—is an ineffective way to build community safety.

We know, and data indicate, that the key factors that help people build stability and avoid further criminal legal system involvement are access to stable housing<sup>1</sup>, employment,<sup>2</sup> and prosocial support<sup>3</sup>. We appreciate that Department and CHS staff engage in discharge planning with our clients to identify community supports and make appropriate referrals. But there is no amount of programming that can make Rikers Island into a place where clients build stability. Quite the opposite. It is a place where our clients are in constant fear of violence and neglect. Where they are unable to access adequate food, both because the food they are served is inedible or because they are blocked from accessing commissary. It is a place where they are subject to extreme temperatures because of crumbling infrastructure. So far this year we have received constant reports from clients in every Rikers jail that the heat is not working, sometimes for days at a time.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8496894/>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp\\_.pdf](https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp_.pdf) at 2.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250476.pdf> at 15.

It is a place where their loved ones have to wait for hours and withstand a long list of indignities just to visit them. It is a place that is immediately and continuously *destabilizing*, depriving people of their privacy, their jobs, and their access to their families.

Therefore, we respectfully submit two comments on programming to prevent recidivism and promote public safety on Rikers Island.

First, that the City must continue to prioritize and properly fund meaningful programming at Rikers Island. People in custody should have input on what kinds of programming are most useful to them, and should have access to as much programming as possible. The Department of Correction must be held accountable for providing it consistently and fairly.

But second, we urge the Council to look far beyond Rikers Island for solutions to recidivism. We must invest in housing, employment opportunities, and family and community supports—the things we know help ensure that people leaving custody do not return.

## **II. Intro 0246-2026**

NDS supports Intro. 0246-26, but urges the Council to consider the following issues and make appropriate amendments to ensure the bill achieves its intended impact.

### **A. DOC must not use the bill as an excuse for delaying release from custody.**

As this Council knows, the Department of Correction operates inefficiently as a rule. Department-wide delays in release procedures prompted Council to pass Local Law 123 in 2017, codified as Admin. Code § 9-148, which requires DOC to release people within three hours of their bail being posted. A 2022 lawsuit alleging DOC’s systemic failure to comply with the law led the City to agree to pay \$300 million to people who were detained unlawfully .<sup>4</sup>

NDS is concerned that DOC will use the requirement that commissary be returned “prior to the individual leaving the department’s custody” to delay people’s release from custody. We suggest including language stating that the commissary-return process must happen within the three-hour timeline contained in Admin. Code § 9-148.

### **B. People leaving custody should be able to choose to receive their unused commissary funds as cash or check.**

Because people are released from custody 24 hours a day, often without the ability to arrange for loved ones to meet them at Rikers Island, some may prefer leaving without cash on hand. For this or any other reason, the law should require that DOC allow people leaving custody to choose to receive their unused commissary funds as cash or check.

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<sup>4</sup> Matt Katz, NYC must pay as much as \$300 million after people posted bail and weren’t released, *Gothamist* (Nov. 30, 2022) <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-must-pay-as-much-as-300-million-after-people-posted-bail-and-werent-released>.

**C. People leaving custody should be able to choose to receive their unused commissary funds upon release or at a later date.**

Similarly, some people may prefer to pick up their unused funds after they are released. The law should require DOC to provide that option and require that DOC make those payments available at *any* DOC facility or bail window, including bail payment centers.

Other people leaving custody may wish to have a designated third party collect their commissary, which would almost always happen after the person in custody is released. Thus, the law should require DOC to allow people leaving custody to opt out of immediately receiving their funds in favor of collecting them later.

**D. The law should clarify that people entering DOCCS custody may continue to have their commissary transferred.**

Currently, people who leave DOC custody to enter DOCCS custody while they still have unused DOC commissary funds will have those funds transferred to DOCCS and available to them while they serve their sentence. We suggest that the law specifically state that people leaving custody may continue to transfer their commissary in this manner.

Thank you for your continued attention to the issues that impact our clients and their families. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bender  
Senior Policy Counsel  
Criminal Defense Practice  
Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem  
ebender@ndsny.org



**BRONX**  
1842 Webster Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
**P:** 718.461.5117  
**F:** 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
**P:** 718.483.9290  
**F:** 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

Dear Criminal Justice Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Committee:

As Founder and CEO of Children of Promise, NYC, I am honored to share not only what we do, but what we have learned in serving children and families impacted by parental incarceration, particularly through crisis, transition, and expansion.

It remains a devastating reality that 1 in 9 Black children has a parent in prison, and children with an incarcerated father are 28% more likely to be suspended or expelled. These outcomes are not coincidental; they are directly tied to policies and practices within the criminal legal system that fail to account for children when a parent is arrested, prosecuted, and sentenced. The trauma of parental incarceration is a predictable consequence of the system, yet supports for children are rarely embedded into criminal justice processes or reform efforts.

### **What We Have Learned**

Early intervention changes trajectories.

Children are most vulnerable at the moment a parent is arrested, during court proceedings, and once a sentence is imposed. Yet systems rarely recognize children as stakeholders during these critical points. Through our work, we have learned that when children are connected early to stable, trauma-informed support, before school disruption, housing displacement, or caregiver crisis, outcomes improve significantly.

Children of Promise, NYC serves as an early resource during these moments, helping caregivers identify safe, consistent placements, maintain school continuity, and ensure children are assigned to a trusted location where their emotional and developmental needs are addressed from the outset. This approach directly aligns with criminal justice reform efforts that seek to mitigate collateral harm and interrupt intergenerational involvement in the justice system.

Connection changes outcomes.

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**BRONX**  
1842 Webster Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
P: 718.461.5117  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

---

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
P: 718.483.9290  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

Children who maintain meaningful relationships with their incarcerated parents show stronger emotional resilience and improved long-term outcomes. That is why we prioritize family connection through year-round programming and our Bond Beyond Bars initiative, which provides free virtual and in-person visits, transportation to facilities up to 100 miles away, letter writing support, mental health services, and free phone calls through JPay.

Building on this work, we are expanding our teleconferencing capacity to ensure children can maintain consistent contact with incarcerated parents regardless of distance, facility restrictions, or caregiver limitations. We are working with the NYS Commissioner Martuscello, we see this advancement as a critical systems level opportunity, one that removes barriers to connection, reduces trauma, and modernizes how agencies support children impacted by incarceration. This is not simply a program enhancement; it is a necessary evolution of how the system responds to families.

Consistency builds trust.

When we opened our South Bronx site at the beginning of COVID-19, the city was shutting down and communities were in crisis. Yet Children of Promise, NYC did not miss a single day of service. We pivoted immediately, delivering meals, providing virtual programming, conducting wellness checks, and ensuring families remained connected and supported during one of the most traumatic periods in recent history.

From that experience, we learned that our families rely on us not just for programming, but for stability. In moments of uncertainty, consistency becomes a lifeline. Showing up every day, especially in crisis, deepens trust and strengthens community resilience.

Space matters.

Safe, culturally affirming environments are not luxuries; they are essential. Our Brooklyn location at 54 MacDonough Street provides classrooms, a library, computer room, cafeteria, and a full court gym that allow children and caregivers to learn, heal, and gather in dignity.

Now, we are building on the lessons learned in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

### **Transforming Our South Bronx Facility**

Children of Promise, NYC will renovate the currently uninhabitable, non-ADA-compliant basement of our South Bronx facility into a fully accessible wellness, recreation, and cultural hub. This space is

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**BRONX**  
1842 Webster Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
P: 718.461.5117  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

---

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
P: 718.483.9290  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

intentionally designed to address the compounded stress and trauma experienced by families impacted by the criminal legal system.

The renovated hub will include:

- Meditation and sensory rooms
- A fitness center and yoga/group workout studio
- An open recreation area
- Locker and shower rooms
- A multipurpose workshop space for workforce training and intergenerational programming

The project will include full HVAC, plumbing, and electrical upgrades; ADA-compliant access and restrooms; enhanced safety systems; and durable, culturally vibrant finishes that reflect the pride and identity of the community we serve.

### **Why This Matters in the Bronx**

The Bronx faces some of the highest rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, and poverty in New York City, alongside high rates of justice system involvement and limited access to safe, affordable wellness spaces. Through this renovation, we will:

- Promote physical and mental well-being
- Foster cultural engagement and social connection
- Support economic mobility and workforce readiness
- Create a sustainable, intergenerational hub that meets evolving community needs

We have learned that healing cannot happen in isolation. It requires spaces where children can regulate their emotions, where caregivers can decompress, where teens can build leadership skills, and where families can gather with dignity.

We have also learned that incarceration's impact extends far beyond the sentence itself. A conviction affects employment, housing, public benefits, education, student loans, and citizenship, collateral consequences that destabilize entire households. This reality underscores the urgent need for criminal justice reforms that address family stability alongside accountability.

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**BRONX**  
1842 Webster Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
P: 718.461.5117  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11216  
P: 718.483.9290  
F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

That is why our approach remains holistic: after-school programming, summer day camp, Saturday Resource Center, mental health services, mentoring, tutoring, financial literacy, healthy meals, caregiver workshops, holiday programming, and direct family connection, provided completely free and at no charge to our families.

### **Looking Ahead: Scaling What Works**

The expansion and renovation of our South Bronx site is not simply a construction project. It is a direct response to what we have witnessed: communities need consistent institutions that intervene early, show up during crisis, and provide continuity of care for children impacted by the criminal legal system.

Children of Promise, NYC is prepared to grow this proven model by establishing additional sites in Queens and Manhattan, ensuring that more children are identified early, connected quickly, and supported consistently, no matter where they live. This is a best practice we urge systems to adopt, treating children as primary stakeholders when a parent is arrested, on trial, and sentenced, rather than an afterthought once harm has already occurred.

If COVID taught us anything, it is that resilience grows where there is trust, infrastructure, and unwavering commitment. Children of Promise, NYC has demonstrated that commitment every single day.

With your support, we will continue to transform not only physical spaces, but life trajectories and we would like the opportunity to replicate the model we started in Brooklyn and then the Bronx into Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island.

Thank you for your leadership and your investment in New York City's children and families.

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**BRONX**  
1842 Webster Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10457  
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F: 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
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**F:** 718.414.2715  
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---

**BROOKLYN**  
54 MacDonough Street  
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**F:** 718.414.2715  
info@cpnyc.org

consistently, no matter where they live. This is a best practice we urge systems to adopt, treating children as primary stakeholders when a parent is arrested, on trial, and sentenced, rather than an afterthought once harm has already occurred.

If COVID taught us anything, it is that resilience grows where there is trust, infrastructure, and unwavering commitment. Children of Promise, NYC has demonstrated that commitment every single day.

With your support, we will continue to transform not only physical spaces, but life trajectories and we would like the opportunity to replicate the model we started in Brooklyn and then the Bronx into Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island.

Thank you for your leadership and your investment in New York City's children and families.



## Testimony of Uzoma "Zo" Orchingwa Co-Founder, Co-CEO Emerge Career

NYC Council Committee on Criminal Justice  
Oversight Hearing: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety

**February 19, 2026**

Subject: Breaking the Cycle: How the Emerge Next Mile NYC is Using Tech and Workforce Development to Solve Recidivism

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Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. My name is Zo Orchingwa, and I am the co-founder of Emerge Career. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I'm here to talk about something I believe deeply: that employment is the most powerful tool we have to break the cycle of incarceration and build safer communities.

The data is clear—and it hits close to home. Right here in New York City, more than half of parolees—53%—are rearrested within three years of release. For our youth, the numbers are even bleaker: nearly half of all young people incarcerated at Rikers return within just *one* year of being discharged.

Yet the solution is not a mystery. A wealth of research confirms that formerly incarcerated individuals who maintain employment for just **one** year have a recidivism rate of only 16%—compared to 52% for those who remain unemployed. The problem is access: six out of ten people released from prison are still jobless four years later. When we fail to connect people to work, we fail our communities.

That's why our partnership with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice through Next Mile NYC has been so transformative. At Emerge Career, we're using technology to solve a critical problem: the reentry system is fragmented, inefficient, and too often sets people up to fail. Our model leverages AI and software to unify what has historically been a broken process—from recruitment and career assessment, to hybrid training, to job placement and retention. We meet incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people where they are, using technology to deliver personalized coaching, track progress in real time, and connect participants directly to employers who are ready to hire.

This program provides free Commercial Driver's License training (and soon more vocational offerings) to justice-involved New Yorkers, connecting them to careers in an industry facing a shortage of 60,000 drivers nationwide.



The results speak for themselves: our graduates are earning an average starting salary of \$80,000—with some earning over \$120,000. We've achieved a near-perfect credential attainment rate for those who completed training, and 100% of our graduates received job offers within six months. Most importantly, we have seen zero reported recidivism among our participants.

But behind every statistic is a person. Let me tell you about Jorge Padilla. Jorge spent nearly a decade in prison. When he came home, he felt like every door was locked. Through Emerge Career and Next Mile NYC, Jorge earned his CDL just 75 days after starting our program and now sits behind the wheel of an 18-wheeler, earning over \$120,000 and contributing to his community. As Jorge told CBS News in a recent feature: "I have an opportunity to do something positive for my life. It feels great to be free, and I'm never going back."

Jorge's story is proof that when we invest in people—when we believe in their potential instead of defining them by their past—we create safer neighborhoods, stronger families, and a more just city.

I urge this Council to continue supporting workforce development programs like Next Mile NYC. Every dollar invested returns dividends in reduced incarceration costs, increased tax revenue, and—most importantly—in human dignity.

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



Freedom  
Agenda

**Testimony to the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice  
Submitted by Darren Mack on behalf of Freedom Agenda  
February 19, 2026**

**Chair Brooks-Powers and Committee Members,**

We are grateful to the Council for holding this hearing. My name is Darren Mack, and I am the Co-Director of Freedom Agenda. I'm a survivor of Rikers, and our members are people who have experienced Rikers, either while detained there or visiting loved ones. We also coordinate the Campaign to Close Rikers, and we are so glad to have a commissioner who is committed to getting it done.

Our members know that strong programs and consistent access to them are an immediate need at Rikers Island now, and a crucial part of the transition to the borough-based jails. Programs that meet people's needs create a supportive environment, provide learning opportunities, and reduce violence. Jails and prisons always isolate people from the outside world to some degree, and the location of Rikers takes this to the extreme. It is a lifeline to have people from outside DOC coming into the jails, showing interest in the lives and futures of people detained there. As a history student in the Bard Prison Initiative, my understanding of systemic inequities and historic injustices which remains today sharpened. This led me towards my passion to advocate and organize for and with marginalized communities. We are relieved to know that outside program providers are finally returning to Rikers Island. We believe that programs should be further expanded in the future, including in the borough-based jail, which will offer more space for programs, and a location that providers can get to much more easily.

Expanding access to programs is not just about funding them. It's also about removing barriers. People who could benefit the most from programming are sometimes prevented from accessing it either because they are kept in isolation, in violation of Local Law 42, or because they are assigned some security status by DOC that excludes them. Those designations are made by DOC with no meaningful way to challenge them, since DOC staff run the disciplinary hearings at Rikers, and incarcerated people often have no representation. This means officers can prevent people from accessing programs for reasons that often amount to nothing more than retaliation.

Increasing freedom of movement in the jails can also help people access programs. In the not-too-distant past, program providers and incarcerated people could be given passes to move through the jails without an escort, making sure that programming isn't interrupted when an officer is unavailable.

In addition to programs, having proper identification and access to commissary funds will support our neighbors returning home from Rikers. We support T2026-1254 and Intro 246, and thank Public Advocate Williams and Council Member Hudson for introducing them.

We recommend a slight amendment to T2026-1254, to include people facing misdemeanor charges. Due to bail reform rollbacks and aggressive NYPD enforcement tactics, the number of people held at Rikers facing misdemeanor charges has grown. While we hope to see this number reduced soon, we don't believe there is good reason to exclude people who are detained on misdemeanor charges.

We also recommend some slight amendments to strengthen Intro 246 and further expand accessibility to reclaiming commissary funds:

- In addition to the option to receive a check, people released from DOC custody should have the option to receive their commissary funds on a preloaded debit card (like one of the disbursement options that NYS Unemployment provides). These should be cards that can be used to withdraw cash, or to make debit payments.
- When we consulted our members about barriers in the commissary funds return process, one of our members shared that upon this release he was picked up from Rikers Island by his parole officer at Rikers Island, and the parole officer tried to hold the funds. The bill should clarify that funds cannot be disbursed to parole, probation or other law enforcement personnel on behalf of the incarcerated person.
- The Council should consider expanding this legislation, or passing additional legislation, to require DOC to proactively provide return all property (both "valuable" and "bulk" property) to people released from DOC facilities as part of the discharge process, without requiring that property return be requested.

Sincerely,

Darren Mack  
Co-Director, Freedom Agenda  
dmack@urbanjustice.org

Send to: [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)

Testimony of Good Shepherd Services  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Submitted by  
LuAnne Blaauboer and I am the Vice President of Vocational Programs at Good Shepherd Services.

February 19, 2026

**Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers, and Committee on Criminal Justice Hearing on Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety** for the opportunity to testify.

My name is LuAnne Blaauboer, and I am the Vice President of Vocational Programs at Good Shepherd Services.

Guided by social and racial justice, Good Shepherd Services (GSS) partners and grows with communities so that all NYC children, youth, and families succeed and thrive. We provide quality, effective services that deepen connections between family members, within schools, and among neighbors. We work closely with community leaders to advocate, both locally and nationally, on behalf of our participants to make New York City a better place to live and work.

Good Shepherd Services has several contracts with DOP including Works plus, which are scheduled to end June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026

My testimony today will focus on the Works Plus Programs. I oversee three Works Plus Contracts, so as I'm sure you can imagine I am very concerned about the decision made by DOP to end Works Plus. I am here today to talk about the value of these small, community-specific programs that support the most vulnerable populations of young adults such as those disconnected from school or work, lives disrupted by the legal system, 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're not. Because those who are most at risk simply 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 focus on truly connecting with young adults, because we know that for young adults – supportive, 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 don't succeed in jobs and training programs. We can 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.

These programs allow us to support young adults in building stability at the same time as 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. And we will never be able to move that needle if we fail to invest in the people who are most at risk

Please help us to protect high-touch, community-based programming, with realistic outcomes that serve and support the MOST vulnerable young adults across New York City.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Testimony [Committee on Criminal Justice](#) - Oversight: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety.

To: NYC Council Committee on Criminal Justice: Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, Chair. Members: Gale A. Brewer, Tiffany L. Cabán, Oswald J. Feliz, Frank Morano, Mercedes Narcisse and Yusef Salaam

Re: Oversight: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety.

From: Kings Against Violence Initiative, Co-Executive Director, Ramik Williams

Dear Committees,

My name is Ramik Williams, and I am here as co-executive of KAVI. KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative, Inc.) is a nonprofit youth development organization that aims to eliminate interpersonal violence from young people's lives. KAVI uses healing-centered approaches that offer young people pathways to thrive. KAVI envisions a world where young people are valued as vital assets, empowered as creative problem-solvers, and embraced as partners in building safer, more just, and more connected communities.

I attended most of the hearing in person but had to attend a separate meeting that prevented me from staying for the entire hearing. However, I did view the hearing on the NYC Council website.

I submit this testimony in support of the new administration and some of its appointed agency leaders. Additionally, I address the important issue of recidivism. My organization runs both Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs and Community Violence Intervention Programs, where the recidivism rate for participants is under 2%, significantly below local and national averages. We carry out this work as a provider at the borough's only Level One trauma center and in the borough with the highest number of violent incidents.

Similar to the testimony provided by city agency leaders and administrators, we have found that recidivism is best addressed through a holistic approach that addresses early exposure to violence, ongoing trauma, and persistent risk factors that lead to violence. These variables, individually and collectively, produce victims of violence and crime and also drive individuals to commit violence. When unaddressed, they lead people to commit crimes repeatedly and often at great expense to their personal safety and well-being. As the new administration continues to onboard, transition into new roles, and fill position vacancies, we hope the city council is paying attention to the approach being touted versus the capacity of city agencies and departments to implement the work. For example, we have already heard of the idea to create an Office of

Public Safety. However, the city already has several agencies and departments dedicated to this work, including the Office of Neighborhood Safety, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the NYPD, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Health and Hospital Corporations, and, to a lesser extent, the Project Pivot initiative within the New York City Public Schools. We implore the council to take a reengineering approach that takes a critical eye to impact versus perceived innovation. We posit that better coordination and collaboration among the existing bodies are needed rather than the creation of a new office. We believe that greater investment in aligning city agencies and in the development and maturation of the Crisis Management System (CMS) is needed rather than the creation of a new department. Los Angeles, Baltimore, Houston, and other cities have already taken appropriate steps to focus on implementing best practices in partnership building, resource provision, and a collective impact approach that have led to decreases in crime, particularly youth crime. For some municipalities, this has manifested in reinvesting in families and youth to address their basic living needs while providing ongoing support, coaching, and encouragement for better decision-making and behaviors toward the future. NYC is facing a labor shortage in many areas, but nowhere is the deficit more glaring than in the mental health sector, where, according to NYC DoHMH reports, the need for mental health professionals greatly outpaces the labor market for licensed clinical social workers, behavioral therapists, psychologists, and other related practitioners. We implore the council to work with the administration to implement a collective action plan that incorporates existing knowledge, successes, information, and resources to address the aforementioned factors that lead to recidivism rather than seek to create new initiatives and offices that are not built on a solid foundation of information and proven methods. Taking this approach will better ensure recidivism is decreased and more New Yorkers can live safely and get the help they need and deserve.

Thank you for your service.

[Ramik@kavibrooklyn.org](mailto:Ramik@kavibrooklyn.org)

929-299-2901

# NYC AT REENTRY COALITION

## NYC Council Committee on Criminal Justice

### Oversight Hearing: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety

Megan French-Marcelin, PhD

Senior Director of New York State Policy at the Legal Action Center

February 19, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee.

My name is Megan French-Marcelin and I am the Senior Director of New York 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 community-based provider organizations who collectively serve more than 40,000 New Yorkers each year. For more than four decades, community-based alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs in New York have demonstrated that stabilizing healthcare with sustained supports reduces incarceration and re-arrest. We thank the Chairwoman for holding an oversight hearing to begin to address the significant public health and safety challenges facing people detained at Rikers and the communities to which they return.

Rikers has for decades warehoused thousands of New Yorkers with serious mental illness and substance use disorder, ostensibly operating the jail as the City's largest *de facto* psychiatric institution — but without the capacity to provide adequate or sustained treatment.

According to the most recent data, more than 60 percent of people detained at Rikers have a diagnosed mental health condition; at least 22 percent have a serious mental illness, and more than half have a diagnosed substance use disorder.<sup>1</sup> Another 28 percent have been diagnosed with a pulmonary disease, and 16 percent with cardiovascular issues. Furthermore, nearly 29 percent of the population is identified as street homeless, a figure that rises to 42 percent for people with serious mental illness.<sup>2</sup> Behavioral health conditions are not peripheral at Rikers — they characterize the majority of the jail population.

Jail is not designed to nor should it be the place to treat mental illness, substance use disorder, or any other health disorder. Its primary function is security and confinement, and to utilize our jails in place of substantive community-based access to treatment is as counterproductive as it is inhumane.

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<sup>1</sup> This accounts for both alcohol use disorders as well as opioid use disorders. See Correctional Health Services, "January 2026: Patient Profile," 2026:

<https://hhinternet.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/2026/02/correctional-health-services-patient-profile-metrics-january-2026.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Rikers Island and mental health: Pathways Toward Community-based, November 2025,

[https://datacollaborativeforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Katal\\_DCJ\\_Report\\_.pdf](https://datacollaborativeforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Katal_DCJ_Report_.pdf).

The profound degradation and abuse of people with physical and behavioral health conditions at Rikers has been well documented. As was first reported by a whistleblower in 2024, and is subject to ongoing investigation by the City's Department of Investigation, individuals with mental illness are routinely deadlocked in their cells, or intake housing, and even in shower stalls for extended periods, cut off from care and medication.<sup>3</sup> Additional reporting from the court-appointed federal monitor has repeatedly revealed systemic neglect, citing the failure of corrections officers to follow protocol on mental health crises, and reinforcing the claims of inappropriate, and frankly illegal, isolation of people with mental health disorders.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, people with complex health needs are not getting access to even the most basic medical and behavioral care, let alone receiving the comprehensive treatment and care they really need. In fact, in just one month last year, there were 15,823 missed medical appointments - which includes mental health appointments - and represents a more than 300 percent increase since 2020.<sup>5</sup> As treatment is delayed or disrupted, individuals with behavioral health needs find themselves detained for far longer periods of time than the rest of the Rikers population; in turn, leading to longer periods of decompensation, further exposure to abuse that can trigger further crises, and flagrant neglect of people who are at clear risk for suicide.

The inability of DOC to keep people alive cannot be overstated, particularly when many of the in-custody deaths involve people with health needs - behavioral and physical. In a Board of Correction (BOC) report on deaths in custody, commissioners noted that in four out of the five in-custody deaths that occurred in the first quarter of 2025, the individuals who tragically lost their lives had documented histories of mental illness and were receiving psychiatric care while detained.<sup>6</sup> In the same report, BOC described the flagrant disregard for human life as corrections officers stood by without notifying medical personnel as people in distress. A system that cannot reliably deliver basic medical care should not be allowed to serve people who are in need of care.

The catastrophic disregard for people with health needs has consequences for reentry as well. Most people in New York City jails return to their communities — often within days: According to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, roughly 36 percent of people on Rikers are detained for fewer than four days.<sup>7</sup> And many of the people with health needs are those who are cycling in and out of Rikers, without the warm hand offs to providers who can provide stabilizing supports.

This is troubling because for people with behavioral and physical health needs, reentry can be a particularly dangerous period. In the first two weeks after release, individuals are thirteen times more

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<sup>3</sup> Reuven Blau, "NYC's Investigation into Rikers 'deadlocking' Drags on for More than 450 Days," THE CITY - NYC News, February 5, 2026, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/02/05/rikers-island-deadlocking-investigation-doi/>.

<sup>4</sup> See the Twentieth Nunez Report, January 2026: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/2026-01-13-20th-Monitors-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Data Collaborative for Justice, Rikers Island and Mental Health: Pathways Toward Community-Based Diversion and Jail Population Reduction (New York: Data Collaborative for Justice, November 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Rahzeem Gray, First-report-and-recommendations-on-2025-deaths-in- ..., November 5, 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/First-Report-and-Recommendations-on-2025-Deaths-in-NYC-DOC-Custody-with-DOC-and-CHS-responses.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup>New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, NYC Criminal Justice Dashboard: Jail Population and Length of Stay Data (New York: MOCJ, 2025),

likely to die than the general population and 130 times more likely to die from overdose.<sup>8</sup> To put a finer point on it: federal data released during the Biden administration reveals that a full quarter of fatal overdoses occur among people recently released from correctional facilities.<sup>9</sup> Many return home with co-occurring physical and behavioral health conditions — including HIV, hepatitis, diabetes, hypertension, serious mental illness, and substance use disorders — yet too often without active Medicaid coverage or continuity of care.<sup>10</sup>

While Correctional Health Services reports that 83 percent of the Rikers population have active Medicaid, providers routinely report that people leave with Medicaid on inpatient status and do not have the appropriate release paperwork for community-based organizations to provide appropriate benefits navigation. In many cases, it can take so long to get paperwork from Rikers, their Medicaid lapses entirely. Furthermore, this causes an undue financial burden on providers as it prevents them from billing Medicaid for serving these individuals for significant periods of time.

Without sustained support, people returning home face heightened risk of relapse, hospitalization, rearrest, and preventable death. Research consistently shows that individuals with untreated serious mental illness or substance use disorders have significantly higher rates of re-arrest and reincarceration;<sup>11</sup> a direct result of the disruptions in treatment that individuals experience inside our correctional facilities.<sup>12</sup>

Effective programming treats reentry as an essential part of the continuum of care. When community-based providers are able to offer reentry services to people leaving incarceration—especially when those providers are able to create connections while people are still at Rikers— individuals are connected to sustained mental health treatment, medication management, substance use treatment paired with counseling and peer support, housing placement and retention services, employment pathways, and coordinated case management that begins before release and continues after. But this requires that providers must be on the island, with access to people in need without delay or obstruction and that discharge planning must include warm handoffs to community based providers who can continue to engage people as they seek to find stability in the community.

It also requires the City to resource providers to ensure that they can hire, sustain and grow clinical staff. In a recent survey of community-based providers, the Coalition found that nearly 40 percent of agencies lacked the clinical staff they needed to scale programming.<sup>13</sup> Non-profit, community-based providers simply cannot compete with the private market in terms of salaries; government contracts significantly depress salaries for clinical staff, making it difficult to attract and retain them, particularly as New York City becomes less affordable. It is not uncommon, for example, for a provider to invest significant time and resources in onboarding and training clinical staff, only to lose them to higher-paying jobs as they

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<sup>8</sup> Shaanth Nanguneri, “Many States Are Eager to Extend Medicaid to People Soon to Be Released from Prison,” Oregon Capital Chronicle, May 4, 2024,

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Cassandra, “For Those with Addiction, Going into and Coming out of Prison Can Be a Minefield.,” NPR, January 16, 2026,

<https://www.npr.org/2026/01/16/nx-s1-5678967/drug-addiction-prison-jails-overdose-vulnerability-opioid-medication-treatment>.

<sup>10</sup> Gore, A. & Amaning, A. (2024, October 29). Expanding access to basic reentry services will improve health, wellbeing, and public safety. Center for American Progress.

<sup>11</sup> Data Collaborative for Justice, *Flagging for Mental Health Needs in New York City Jails: Prevalence and Timing*, (New York: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, April 2025), 3-5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Survey - NYS ATI and Reentry Coalition, Service Providers Survey, ongoing: results can be made available upon request.

seek to grow their families. This represents not only a loss of the staff person but also of the time and effort of the agency as a whole on hiring and onboarding. This also causes harm to the participants in those services, who are likely distrustful of systems based on experience and may have built significant relationships in spite of such barriers.

The evidence that community-based behavioral health interventions reduce recidivism and improve health is clear and compelling. CASES' Nathaniel ACT program, serving individuals with serious mental illness facing felony charges in New York City, reduced homelessness by 70 percent and psychiatric hospitalizations by 50 percent, while 94 percent of participants avoided new felony convictions.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice reports that community-based integrated housing and clinical programs have demonstrated a 40 percent reduction in total jail days and a 55 percent reduction in psychiatric hospital days over two years, while maintaining long-term housing stability for the vast majority of participants.<sup>15</sup> These are public health interventions that reduce recidivism, improve health outcomes, and strengthen community stability. However, the City must invest to scale programs like the aforementioned that require long-term engagement and specialized staffing. Promoting public health, advancing equity, and sustaining these outcomes require strengthening and scaling the infrastructure that already works.

Investing in the communities most impacted by incarceration and strengthening behavioral health access reduces system cycling while addressing longstanding disparities in health and opportunity. The health disparities that we see in people with criminal legal system involvement map onto those we see across an increasingly unequal city: New York has long been the most unequal large city in the nation. These disparities are rooted in neighborhood-level disinvestment in housing, behavioral health services, and employment opportunities as well as the retrenchment of public resources. Given the interrelationship of race, intergenerational and place-based economic disadvantage, and criminal legal system involvement, investing in programming delivered by trust community-based organizations in our jails and in our communities, is just one way to reduce inequities and enhance safety and well-being.

The Council must prioritize sustained funding for community-based alternatives to incarceration and reentry services; ensure active Medicaid enrollment and care continuity beginning on day one of release; support coordinated partnerships between Correctional Health Services, Department of Correction and community providers; and advance cross-agency funding strategies that treat reentry as a long-term investment in New Yorkers and their communities.

New York has a proven foundation of community-based providers and evidence-based models. With sustained and scaled investment, these programs can reduce system cycling, promote long-term stability and strengthen public health and safety across our communities.

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<sup>14</sup> Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), Nathaniel ACT: Assertive Community Treatment for Justice-Involved Individuals with Serious Mental Illness (New York: CASES, n.d.)

<sup>15</sup> "Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Department of Health Announce Successful Rollout of 'Justice-Involved Supportive Housing' Program Stabilizing Individuals Who Frequently Cycle through Jail and Shelter," NYC - Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, April 24, 2018, <https://criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/in-the-news/mayors-office-of-criminal-justice-department-of-health-announce-successful-rollout-of-justice-involved-supportive-housing-program-stabilizing-individuals-who-frequently-cyc/>.



Mental  
Health  
Project

New York City Council  
Committee on Criminal Justice

**Oversight – Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety**

Thursday, February 19, 2026  
250 Broadway, 8<sup>th</sup> floor, Hearing Room 2, New York, NY

Testimony of  
Marco Barrios  
Criminal Justice Advocate  
Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project  
646-459-3093 • [mbarrios@urbanjustice.org](mailto:mbarrios@urbanjustice.org)

My name is Marco Barrios, a formerly incarcerated Gulf War veteran and presently a Criminal Justice Advocate with Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project. One of my roles is to monitor discharge planning services for *Brad H.* class members, individuals in NYC jails with mental health challenges. Back in 2019, I also was engaged as a member of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice Implementation Task Force, as part of the subcommittee on programming. I respectfully urge this Council to prioritize the strengthening of reentry infrastructure within our city jail system and to ensure that individuals returning to the community are equipped with the fundamental tools necessary for successful reintegration.

First, reentry must begin at intake—not at the point of release. Evidence-based reentry programming should start immediately upon incarceration and continue seamlessly post-release. A continuity-of-care model that bridges custody and community supervision significantly reduces recidivism, improves public safety outcomes, and enhances long-term stability. Reentry planning should include individualized assessments, case management, workforce readiness, behavioral health support, and coordinated referrals to community providers prior to release.

Second, the programs offered within city jails must be both effective and applicable to real-world reintegration. This means investing in therapeutic interventions, cognitive-behavioral programming, trauma-informed care, and workforce development curricula that are responsive to the actual barriers individuals face upon release. Importantly, these programs should be facilitated by qualified professionals, including peers with lived experience who also possess academic and clinical credentials. Individuals who have successfully navigated the reentry

process bring credibility, relatability, and practical insight that research consistently shows increases engagement and program completion rates. In addition, some of these programs should involve the support of businesses, colleges/universities, and the Department of Labor so that the outcome can be much more successful.

Finally, no reentry strategy is complete without ensuring access to proper identification and essential documents upon release. Without a valid state ID, Social Security card, or birth certificate, individuals are effectively barred from securing employment, housing, healthcare, and public benefits. The absence of identification creates an immediate structural barrier that undermines reintegration efforts. I urge the Council to implement or expand a pre-release identification program so that individuals leave custody with valid documentation in hand.

Public safety and community stability are strengthened when reentry systems are proactive, coordinated, and practical. By initiating reentry programming at the earliest stage of incarceration, investing in evidence-based and peer-supported interventions, and guaranteeing access to identification upon release, this Council can significantly improve outcomes for returning residents and the community as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to building a safer, more equitable city.

**New York City Council  
Committee on Criminal Justice  
Oversight: Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety  
Written Testimony of Youth Represent  
February 19, 2026**

Youth Represent is dedicated to improving the lives and futures of young people impacted by the Criminal Legal System. When the legal system creates barriers to success for youth, we use the law to help them leave the stigma of a criminal record behind. We provide criminal and civil reentry legal representation to young people aged 16-26, assisting them with everything from rap sheet review to school suspensions to employment discrimination and any other legal needs they identify. We also engage in policy advocacy and youth leadership development through Youth Development workshops, our Youth Committee, and the Youth Justice & Opportunities Act (YJ&O) Campaign.

Thank you to Chair Brooks-Powers, Committee members, and staff for the opportunity to provide written testimony for the Oversight Hearing on Programming to Prevent Recidivism and Promote Public Health and Safety.

## **1. New York City Must Invest in Resources and Opportunities for Young People - Not Criminalization**

Across New York City's five boroughs, an estimated 37,000<sup>1</sup> young New Yorkers—primarily Black and Brown young people—are drawn into the justice system through arrests, convictions, and incarceration. This is a cycle that will not stop until the City invests in a robust network of community-oriented, youth-specific resources and opportunities to keep New York families safe and healthy.

As of June 2025, the most recently available data, there were 296 youth in NYC's Secure Detention Centers<sup>2</sup>, despite the maximum bed capacity being 212. For years, ACS has been operating under a waiver from the Office of Children and Family Services which allows the agency to circumvent the state law that mandates private bedrooms for youth in secure detention. Under this waiver, young people have been sleeping on cots in hallways and classrooms at Horizon and Crossroads. Temporarily adding beds and continually renewing this waiver is a band-aid that does not adequately or sustainably address overcrowding. The time to consider and act on alternatives is now.

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<sup>1</sup>"Workbook: NYS Arrests by County." Division of Criminal Justice Services, n.d. [https://mypublicdashboard.ny.gov/t/QJRP\\_PUBLIC/views/NYSArrestsbyCounty/HistoricalData?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y](https://mypublicdashboard.ny.gov/t/QJRP_PUBLIC/views/NYSArrestsbyCounty/HistoricalData?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y).

<sup>2</sup> "Open Data FLASH Jan 2015 - June 2025.xlsx" NYC Administration for Children's Services, last updated September 30, 2025. [https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Monthly-Flash-Report-indicators/2ubh-v9er/about\\_data](https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Monthly-Flash-Report-indicators/2ubh-v9er/about_data).

To address the overcrowding crisis and successfully redirect and depopulate Secure Detention, **the City must expand investments in youth-specific Alternatives to Detention and Incarceration (ATDs and ATIs), especially for felony charges.** We know that incarceration has disastrous effects on youth outcomes: residential placements like secure detention centers create obstacles to psychosocial development, making it harder for youth to learn to control impulsive and aggressive behavior, function autonomously, take responsibility for their behavior, and consider other points of view. Research indicates that rather than promote safety, youth detention centers **increase** the probability of recidivism as an adult by between 20-30%. Community-based approaches, by contrast, have been found to lower the recidivism rate by around 5%.

Research from the Sentencing Project lays out a roadmap for effective strategies to reduce youth incarceration and promote public safety and youth development. As we describe below, New York City's excellent youth justice providers already incorporate these strategies into their models, but the City's investment in them is a fraction of what it spends on surveilling, policing, and incarcerating young people.<sup>3</sup>

1. **Credible messenger mentoring programs** hire community residents with a history of involvement in the justice system who provide intensive support to youth and their families, typically as one part of a multi-pronged intervention.

NYC Program Models:

**The Crisis Management System** - this network deploys teams of credible messengers who mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence in NYC

- i. Shows an average 40% reduction in gun violence across program areas compared to a 31% reduction in comparison areas

**Cure Violence** - a violence interruption program under the Crisis Management System designed to reduce gun violence, providing street outreach and public awareness. Their work correlates with a reduction in gun violence in historically high-violence neighborhoods (Cure Violence participants include young teenagers)

1. In South Bronx, gun injuries dropped 37%, shooting victimizations dropped 63%
2. In East New York (Brooklyn), gun injuries dropped 50%

2. **Advocate/Mentor programs, such as Youth Advocate Programs**, assign trained community residents to work intensively with young people and their families, providing support to the families and helping young people avoid delinquency and achieve goals delineated in their individualized case plans.

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<sup>3</sup> Mendel, Richard. "Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration." The Sentencing Project, June 28, 2023. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/effective-alternatives-to-youth-incarceration/>.

NYC Program Models:

**Arches** - a transformative mentoring program for young people on probation aged 16-24 who have been deemed high-risk of continued system involvement, had significantly lower rates of felony reconviction compared to similarly-situated young people on probation who were not in the program. This is a group mentoring program, led by credible messenger mentors in community-based organizations:

- i. 69% lower felony reconviction rate after one year on probation
- ii. 57% lower felony reconviction rate after two years

**Advocate Intervene Mentor (AIM)** - a one-on-one mentoring program known as an Alternative to Placement for youth in Family Court who would otherwise be ordered to out-of-home placement (meaning they were deemed among the highest-risk and need youth) had the following impact:

- iii. 90.9% avoided another Family Court adjudication within one year of program enrollment
- iv. 98.4% avoided a Youthful Offender adjudication or felony conviction in criminal court within one year of program enrollment
- v. AND within one year of program completion, only 3% had a Youthful Offender adjudication or felony conviction – compared youth released from facilities who are reconvicted within a year of release at a rate of 25%

3. **Family-focused, multidimensional therapy models**, such as Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) employ specially trained therapists who follow detailed protocols to identify and confront factors that propel a young person toward delinquent conduct, with a heavy focus on working with family members to support youth success.

NYC Program Models:

**CASES IMPACT**- A model that uses home-based family therapy and wrap-around services and that was successfully used by Esperanza in New York City for a decade to support youth charged with serious offenses in the community, preventing detention and incarceration. The New York City Department of Probation shifted the contract from Esperanza to CASES in 2023 but then cut the funding to CASES before the program was allowed to begin. The City has no current plan to replace this critical program.

4. **Cognitive behavioral therapy plus mentors for youth and young adults** at extreme risk, like the programs offered by Roca, Inc., engage youth and young adults living in violence-torn neighborhoods who are at extreme risk for future incarceration. Roca youth workers provide participants with cognitive behavioral therapy and connect them with education, employment, and other relevant services.

5. **Restorative Justice interventions targeting youth** accused of serious offenses provide an alternative to traditional court. These programs typically involve victims, and they culminate in a conference where victims, accused youth, and caring adults in their lives meet to discuss the harm caused by the offense and craft plans for the youth to “make things right” and to avoid subsequent offending and achieve success.
6. **Wraparound programs assign a care coordinator** to develop individualized plans offering an array of services to assist children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances – sometimes including youth facing serious delinquency charges – who might otherwise be placed into residential facilities.

Many of the pre-existing ATI programs in NYC use a combination of the approaches described above. The report “Landscape of Youth Services for Young People with Juvenile and/or Criminal Legal Systems Involvement,” which we submit along with this testimony and are proud to have collaborated on with the NYC Youth Justice Coalition, outlines comprehensive budget and policy recommendations to increase funds for effective prevention, alternatives to incarceration, alternatives to detention and supervised release across the five boroughs. By adopting these recommendations, New York City can seize every opportunity to promote young people’s health and well-being and to keep them living safely at home with their parents and families, in schools and communities.

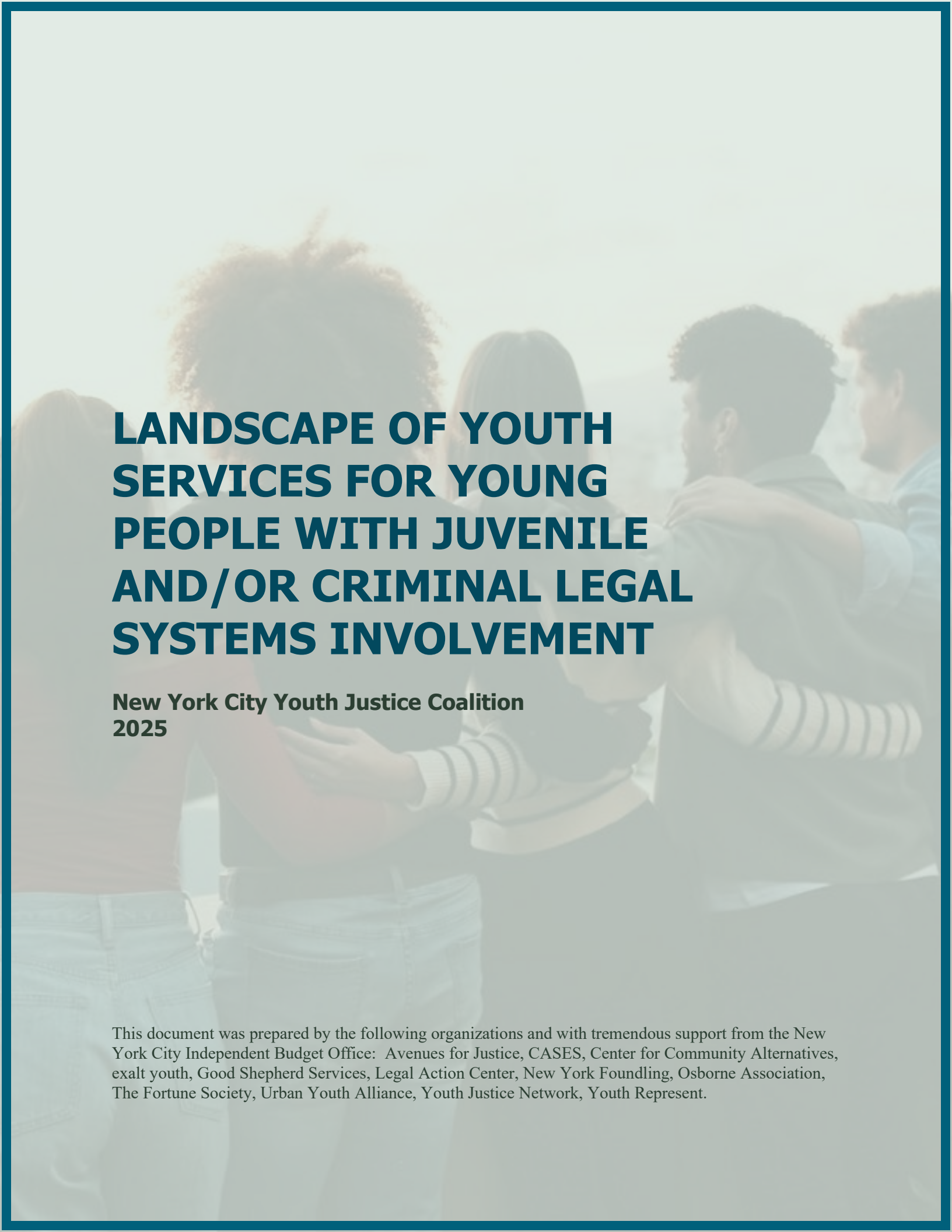
## **2. Youth Represent: Critical Services for Youth**

Youth Represent currently provides services to adolescents and young adults across New York City – essential programs that reduce contact between young people and the criminal legal system and increase individual health and community safety. With support from the New York City Council through the Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative and the Discharge Planning Initiative, Youth Represent provides reentry legal services for young people in their own communities. We are deliberate in serving Black, Latiné, Indigenous, and other youth of color who otherwise would not have access to legal services, with a priority on serving those with criminal legal system involvement. We have also expanded our age range from 24 and under to youth 26 and under in response to growing research that shows that young adult brains continue to develop into the mid-twenties. This shift also addresses the very practical reality that our partner organizations often welcome participants over the age of 24.

We focus on young people living within New York City’s five boroughs and are committed to providing inclusive and gender-affirming services to all youth. In 2025, 95% of our clients were people of color, including 52% Black, 28% Latinx, 11% multiracial, and 4% Asian. Our clients have an average age of 23, with 14% being non-U.S. citizens and 26% living in subsidized housing. Only 13% are employed full-time, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive support.

These statistics highlight the significant barriers our youth face in achieving stability and self-sufficiency, emphasizing the critical role Youth Represent plays in empowering marginalized young people to overcome systemic challenges, support their health and wellbeing, and build brighter futures. City Council funding, through the **Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative** and the **Discharge Planning Initiative**, has allowed us to provide critical legal services and mental health services for youth.

We thank the Council for considering this testimony and for committing to bettering the futures of young people in New York City.



# **LANDSCAPE OF YOUTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH JUVENILE AND/OR CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEMS INVOLVEMENT**

**New York City Youth Justice Coalition  
2025**

This document was prepared by the following organizations and with tremendous support from the New York City Independent Budget Office: Avenues for Justice, CASES, Center for Community Alternatives, exalt youth, Good Shepherd Services, Legal Action Center, New York Foundling, Osborne Association, The Fortune Society, Urban Youth Alliance, Youth Justice Network, Youth Represent.

# THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

## LANDSCAPE OF YOUTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH JUVENILE AND/OR CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEMS INVOLVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

For youth involved in the juvenile justice and/or the criminal legal system, it is critical to strengthen and scale existing programs so that young people in all five New York City boroughs can access comprehensive, community-based supports that help them thrive. What follows is an overview of current programs serving justice-involved youth, each accompanied by programmatic and budget recommendations that outline a blueprint for building a more coordinated and effective youth justice system.

It is critical to note that youth services have long been underfunded compared to adult services, leaving providers to patch together multiple contracts to fill persistent budget and resource gaps. Therefore, we are also making broader recommendations that address gaps in contracts and procurement processes, wage floors for human services workers, and coordination that can support a vision for community safety that benefits all young people. Finally, we outline programmatic investments that could help to scale youth justice through community-based interventions, working toward a “zero youth detention” model.

### Administration of Children Services (ACS)

***Mentoring and Advocacy Program (MAAP):*** Mentoring and Advocacy Program (MAAP) is designed for youth involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the juvenile or criminal justice system. Programs provide targeted, timelimited services to youth and their families with the goal of promoting positive behaviors, healthy relationships, and problem-solving skills that will allow youth to remain in the community and reduce involvement in the juvenile justice system. **The proposed funding for MAAP in FY27 is \$2.4 million.**

***Recommendation:*** Maintain the existing program at \$2.4 million per year with a cost of living adjustment attached to each new year of funding.

***Assertive Community Engagement & Success (ACES):*** Assertive Community Engagement & Success (ACES) is a multiyear program that provides therapeutic, education, and employment services to young people, ages 16 to 24, who are identified in their communities as being at risk for involvement in the criminal legal system. Using a research-backed intervention model, ACES identifies young people who are resistant to engagement and uses persistent outreach, tailored programming, and collaboration with community partners to help young men transform their lives through meaningful relationships, skill building, and opportunities for success.

***Recommendation:*** ACES is a critical early prevention program. The FY26 approved budget allocates additional funding to create at least 360 more slots for young people annually. The Administration should earmark at least \$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. While the approved FY 26 budget added funding for up to 500 slots, this expansion would further grow the program from serving about 140 young people annually, to serving over 1,000 people annually. The program currently serves East Harlem and the South Bronx; an expansion would allow growth to several new neighborhoods in the Bronx and to Brooklyn and

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<sup>1</sup> A note about this document: Wherever possible, we inserted both current budget numbers and corresponding recommendations about how that budget line should be increased to shore up the other programmatic recommendations we considered. Where we could not find budget lines, our recommendations are strictly programmatic- and policy-focused. Also, while this is a survey of programs that touch young people with juvenile or criminal legal systems involvement, it is not comprehensive.

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Queens. The expansion should be phased in over 3-5 years to ensure fidelity to the model and the ability for providers to build the deep community ties essential to success.

***Family Court Alternative to Detention Programs:*** Choices is an Alternative to Detention program for children facing charges in Manhattan and Bronx Family Courts. Choices is a vibrant hub of learning and youth development, helping children and their families build positive relationships and access resources in their communities. The program starts with individual assessments of the young person to develop a service plan, with case management offered in the home so busy families can access the full program benefits. Programming includes school liaison services to help children stay in school, navigate Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and access in-school resources; mental health services through CASES' Nathaniel Clinic or Adolescent Portable Therapy Program; after-school programming including art, cooking, basketball, poetry and homework support; and parent support workshops and family nights to strengthen family bonds and communication.

***Recommendation:*** Maintain funding for these crucial programs to ensure young people and their families are successfully supported in the community. We recommend flexible funding for concrete needs of youth and families, particularly where it helps them to access services. Expand funding to allow for a Parent Advocate and mental health support as part of the staffing pattern. All young people should have access to a space to address their mental health needs that is both safe and culturally competent.

***Parent Support Program:*** Parents with youth in detention are often in need of support in a variety of areas. As youth navigate carceral systems, their caretakers are as well. Often without knowledge of the process and/or participants, many parents feel overwhelmed and underprepared. The Parent Support Program (PSP) provides support via an advocate who has knowledge of the court system, process and participants. In addition to providing court advocacy and moral support for parents, PSP also provides connections to assist with concrete needs and individualized planning as well as a community of staff and peers to support parents. Currently, these programs are supporting youth (and families) connected to detention and placement across the city.

***Recommendation:*** Parent Support Services with ACS can only provide support for families in Family Court and/or the Youth Part who have touched detention or placement. Expand the program to also allow an open door policy for Family Support Services for youth in vulnerable communities as a prevention intervention versus supporting parents when in crisis.

## **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD):**

***Crisis Management System/Community Violence Intervention:*** New York City's Crisis Management System (CMS) is a community-based anti-gun violence prevention program that targets persistent gun-violence hotspots through conflict mediation, de-escalation, and supportive services delivered by trusted credible messengers from the community. Modeled after the Cure Violence evidence-based model and rooted in the Community Violence Intervention approach, CMS has expanded to nearly 29 precincts with substantial City investment where organizations work to reduce shootings, change community norms around violence and address the social conditions that allow gun violence to spread. CMS components include: Community Violence Intervention, school conflict mediation, therapeutic services, an employment program and hospital-based violence intervention programs. CMS sites have been destabilized by inconsistent agency leadership, moving from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) to their current agency home, DYCD; meanwhile, essential components of the violence interruption model, like WorksPlus, are

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housed at other agencies, thus fragmenting oversight and program continuity.<sup>2</sup> The City has not properly supported the program’s infrastructure and leadership development, and failed to provide consistent oversight. The system lacks a comprehensive, standardized evaluation framework, making it difficult to assess long-term impact, identify successful interventions, or allocate resources efficiently. Additionally, severe payment delays—now averaging more than eight months—disrupt operations, threaten service continuity, and diminish the credibility of community violence intervention programs. **The proposed funding for CVI in FY27 is \$56,411,682.**

***Recommendation:*** The City must restore the model of CMS as a public health approach to gun violence, with training and ongoing support from culturally-competent, public health professionals who can work with violence interrupters and site managers. Additionally, the administration should create the infrastructure for stronger citywide coordination—including a dedicated CVI oversight team, standardized data practices for reporting to allow providers to see trends over time between and among sites, expanded training, and structured collaboration between sites that would transform CMS from a fragmented set of programs into a unified, strategically managed system. Community Violence Intervention sites would benefit from an integrated real-time data dashboard and should adopt a continuous, data-driven evaluation process to refine interventions, guide expansion into other high-need neighborhoods, and improve program effectiveness.

CVI contracts are due to expire in June of 2026 and without a clear path of extensions or renewals, CVI providers have uncertainty around their funding relationship with the City. Finally, the City must stabilize CVI operations by eliminating chronic payment delays, and an advance-payment model.<sup>3</sup>

***Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program:*** The Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program (AGVEP) is a year-round initiative for youth ages 14–24 that provides employment and enrichment opportunities for individuals at risk of experiencing or engaging in violence and operates alongside Community Violence Intervention sites. Through partnerships with community organizations and local stakeholders, AGVEP helps participants obtain essential employment documents, secure job placements, develop leadership skills, and engage in positive community activities. The program operates in two phases—a six-week summer session and a 25-week school-year session. **The proposed funding for AGVEP in FY27 is \$5,012,369.**

***Recommendation:*** Youth employment is an essential service and a powerful motivating force for young people to desist from violence. We recommend that all Community Violence Intervention sites maintain AGVEP and increase funding for each site to hire a full time AGVEP director. CVI providers have asked that this program be expanded to support older youth and emerging adults that struggle to find employment and have risk factors that can lead to involvement in violence. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$8,114,227.**

***DYCD Youth Enrichment Services:*** YES (formally School Conflict Mediation) engages school-aged youth ages of 11-21 in programming and supportive services that seek to change the culture around violence and encourage positive youth development. YES is delivered in and around schools in neighborhoods with a high prevalence of community violence. DYCD uses data from New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and NYPD to ensure Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are partnered

<sup>2</sup> Please see “The Cure for Crisis: The Power and Potential of Community Violence Intervention,” New York City Comptroller, March 10, 2025: <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/the-cure-for-crisis/>.

<sup>3</sup> Several NYC Council bills are attempting to address the lapses in contracts and funding that have plagued contracting for community-based human services providers across the City. The administration should work to support these efforts including the passage of Int. 1392-2025, which would allow MOCJ to issue advance payments expanding the Council’s Discretionary Grant Pilot. This should be done across all city agencies to ensure that providers are not experiencing gaps and delays in funding that lead to gaps and delays in service.

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with schools with the greatest need. YES staff actively recruit and engage youth who are vulnerable to system involvement and may be at risk for interpersonal violence or who have experienced community violence. The four main components of the YES model include: structured in-school engagement, conflict mediation, case management and safe passage. **The proposed funding for YES in FY27 is \$7,584,063.**

***Recommendation:*** Reinstate, expand and fully fund YES services with original workscope as an effective impactful preventive tool. Relatedly, YES should operate with all of the components of CMS sites, including therapeutic services, employment readiness training and employment opportunities, and sustained case management; this will require additional contract lines to expand these services where they do not exist. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$8,584,063.**

***ATLAS:*** The Atlas Program is a free, voluntary initiative that supports young people ages 16–22 who have had multiple encounters with the criminal legal system. Through Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and tailored access to education, job training, and other resources, Atlas helps participants strengthen family relationships and build long-term stability. Providers connect eligible youth to the program in court and through follow-up outreach, offering an alternative to repeated justice involvement. By addressing root causes and providing sustained support, Atlas helps young people change their path and move toward brighter futures. **The proposed funding for ATLAS in FY27 is \$24,068,473.**

***Recommendation:*** ATLAS is a model for how FFT can serve and strengthen family ties for youth with criminal legal system involvement. Currently, contracts are stretched to support therapists, support staff and navigators, but leave little room for youth engagement and wrap-around supports. Overall, funding for ATLAS should be doubled to provide for new teams in all five boroughs while increasing lines of funding for youth engagement pieces like outreach, programmatic activities, and support services. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$59,107,852.**

***Comprehensive After School System (COMPASS):*** DYCD'S COMPASS program offers a comprehensive range of no-cost afterschool programs for students in grades K-12. These programs are designed to support the academic, social, and emotional development of young people through a variety of activities. In 2015, COMPASS launched a pilot program to service middle school youth in ACS and homeless facilities. There are seven (7) pilot programs that are located at the Department of Homeless Service (DHS), Secure Detention (SD) and Non-Secure Detention Facilities (NSD) providing support and services to youth involved in the juvenile justice system. In collaboration with the Administration for Children Services and the Department of Homeless Services as well as community-based organizations with history working with these populations, DYCD offers tailored career exploration programming that aims to support youth in the areas of career pathways, leadership, restorative justice, and enrichment.

The secure detention sites for juveniles in New York City, namely Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Centers, were each originally designed to house 108 youth. As of November 2025, these facilities have a census in excess of 170 youth per facility (approximately 340 youth across both sites). The existing overcrowding inevitably creates an array of challenges for service delivery. The challenges range from the lack of available space to accommodate programs, to the need for additional funding to support the excess of program participants. **The proposed funding for COMPASS in FY27 is \$1,471,817,148.**

***Recommendation:*** The current cost per participant for services to youth in secure detention is \$6,000 with total contract dollars corresponding with the number of young people each detention center is designed to house rather than correlating with current census numbers. Given the current census within secure detention facilities, funding levels must increase to ensure that all youth detained are receiving adequate services. Additionally, the cost per participant must be increased to account for the influx of older youth who are seeking access to credential-bearing programs, like Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training, which come at a higher cost. These programs and

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services are essential to account for the reality of youth who are seeking to ensure access to employment and skill-building upon release. We recommend increasing funding levels per participant, thus building in the flexibility to offer a higher level of programming for older youth, to ensure providers can meet all detained youth needs. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$1,671,817,148.**

### **Department of Probation:**

**NeON Works:** NeON Works provides youth and young adults with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience that prepare them for success in the workplace. Members can earn a stipend based on participation and goal attainment and can take part in the program for up to a full year. NeON is open to all residents in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Far Rockaway, Harlem, Jamaica, northern Staten Island and the South Bronx, as well as people on probation who live anywhere in New York City. Priority is given to people ages 16-24. **The proposed FY27 funding for NeON is \$2,575,000.**

**Recommendation:** Currently, sites have been painted to look more like precincts, and youth have to walk through metal detectors. It will be critical to restore the original ethos of the NeON programs which were set up to create welcoming, holistic, community-based spaces by a) restoring the function of each NeON site to operate as inclusive of community participants; b) increasing contracts to provide for additional staff at sites where this function has been curtailed in recent years; and, c) restoring contracts for subcontractors that have been essential to ensure adequate service provision in communities. In the best iterations of NeON, young people were able to report to Probation at NeON sites instead of court-based DOP sites. This practice should be reinstated and all NeON sites open in 2021 should be re-opened. Finally, NeON programs have traditionally been an essential tool in the prevention landscape with original sites being open not simply to young people on probation, but as a service site for community participants (all young people in a certain area irrespective of legal system involvement) that ensures a prevention-first model. Recently, sites have been prohibited from serving community participants thus circumscribing the capacity of staff to engage in prevention services. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$3,200,000.**

**WorksPlus:** WorksPlus provides flexible work readiness wrap-around services to young adults ages 16-30 who have been touched by gun violence and referred to the program by the NYC Crisis Management System (CMS). Program activities include career awareness services, connection to educational opportunities, vocational skills training, assistance with job search competencies, and case management. There is also a strong emphasis on soft skills and basic life skills development as a means toward work readiness. All WorksPlus contracts are scheduled to end in June 2026. **The proposed FY27 funding for WorksPlus is \$2,659,253.**

**Recommendation:** While WorksPlus is an essential program, it is not a standalone program although it is currently contracted as such. Providers must cobble together other contracts to provide the robust services necessary to truly support participants. Contracts make it challenging to allocate for fulltime staff without additional funding from other sources and many providers note that they can no longer afford food, metrocards, and other supplies needed to adequately serve young people. Providers are currently relying on salary accruals to make ends meet through the end of the fiscal year. A new Request for Proposal should be issued with reasonable outcomes that are directly focused on the soft skills training at the core of the program. Outcomes should be aligned with the original, core intention of the program, which was to increase job readiness through developing life skills, soft skills, and through civic/community engagement. Additionally, budgets should be expanded in order to keep pace with inflation, the increased cost of staff salaries and indirect costs, and minimum wage increases. Finally, WorksPlus has lived under DOP whereas CMS sites (which

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are responsible for referrals) currently reside in DYCD; given these programs are interconnected, we are recommending that these two programs are housed under the same agency. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$3,700,000.**

**Adolescent Portable Therapy:** Adolescent Portable Therapy (APT) is a flexible in-home family therapy model designed to identify, reinforce, and leverage a family's existing strengths to create buy-in and willingness to learn new relational skills and begin to address challenges including the participating young person's problem behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, truancy, etc.). This short-term intervention works with young people ages 12-24 and lasts four to six months and includes cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques.

**Recommendation:** APT funding should be immediately restored to \$130,000 annually. The program should also be expanded to provide services to significantly more young people and families. DOP and DOHMH should jointly consider whether the program should move to DOHMH, which could set aside spaces for young people with Probation mandates while expanding the voluntary program to prevent Probation involvement. **The recommended FY27 budget for this program is \$130,000.**

**Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM):** Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM) program, an Alternative to Placement (ATP) program, helps high-risk youth ages 13-18 avoid out-of-home placement in facilities by allowing youth to be placed under an intensive model of probation supervision while receiving wraparound services from a credible messenger employed by a provider organization. The organization provides services for youth across any given borough. AIM is a six- to twelve- month court-mandated (Family Court) ATP program that utilizes a one-on-one mentoring model with a paid advocate-mentor (credible messenger) who is available around the clock. Over 80% of participants avoided felony rearrest within 12 months of enrollment, far exceeding the program's deliverables.<sup>4</sup> AIM also employs a Parent Coach who helps to support parents as they navigate the Family Court system. All AIM contracts are scheduled to run out in June 2026. **The proposed FY27 funding for AIM is \$2,079,639.**

**Advocate, Intervene, Mentor Non-ATP (AIM Non-ATP):** This program is a subset of the AIM Program and operates to engage youth with high risk factors ages 13-18 who are not *mandated through an ATP*. These youth are often referred to the program by Probation Officers as a means of additional support to youth who are struggling with the conditions of lower-level Probation. AIM Non-ATP is a non-conventional mentoring program that pairs youth with credible messengers, trusted community members with whom they can form transformational relationships. AIM Non-ATP also employs Parent Coaches who provide support and assistance to caregivers, helping them to navigate systems and the challenges their children are experiencing.

**Recommendation:** Ensure continued implementation of AIM via contract renewals or new Request for Proposal (RFP), as appropriate. As the City moves toward a decarceration plan for youth in NYC, the City should expand services throughout the City and include funding for education assistance programming for one-on-one tutoring as many youth are disconnected from school and/or employment. Research has shown a strong correlation between incarceration and education attainment.<sup>5</sup> The City should also address youth furthering their involvement in the carceral system by using a two-generation approach; at the same time providers are supporting youth, they must also

<sup>4</sup> Please see, New York City, "Findings at a Glance," Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, 2018: [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/evidence/AIM\\_Final\\_Findings\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/evidence/AIM_Final_Findings_2018.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> John Whibey, "Juvenile incarceration and its impact on high school graduation rates and adult jail time," *Journalist Resource*, February 4, 2015: <https://journalistsresource.org/education/juvenile-incarceration-long-term-consequences/#:~:text=Juvenile%20incarceration%20decreases%20the%20chances,an%20increase%20in%20adult%20incarceration.%E2%80%9D>

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support families and will need financial resources to offer families with concrete, educational, vocational and mental health resources. Additionally, AIM Director positions require a licensed master social worker (LMSW). In order for providers to attract and retain an LMSW, Probation will need to include additional funding to support this position. **The recommended budget for this program is \$3,079,639.**

**IMPACT:** IMPACT is a now-defunct capsule program run through the Department of Probation that was designed to divert 175 young people (aged 14-18) annually from probation or detention to comprehensive services including counseling (both family counseling and individual sessions), case management, and mentoring. While DOP cited budget restraints in cutting the program, the total program budget was just \$3.3 million. **There is no budget line for IMPACT in FY27.**

**Recommendation:** Restore the program and increase funding to \$4.1 million to ensure staff capacity and retention without having to borrow from other contracts. Restoring IMPACT is critical to the goal of reducing the number of youth in detention citywide and addressing the crisis of overcrowding in detention. **The recommended budget for this program is \$4.1 million.**

**Arches:** Arches Transformative Mentoring program works with youth ages 16-24 on probation, combining credible messengers, group sessions and individualized activities to set positive goals.<sup>6</sup> Arches participants were less than half as likely as a matched comparison group to be convicted of a new felony both 12 months and 24 months after beginning probation. Investments like these are critical now because they save taxpayer dollars and reduce youth crime. Arches uses an evidence-based interactive journaling curriculum delivered by credible messengers. When independently evaluated by the Urban Institute in 2017, the program led to a 57% decrease in reconviction rates.<sup>7</sup> **The proposed FY27 funding for Arches is \$3,421,705.**

**Recommendation:** Fully restore funding for Arches and engage stakeholders to discuss the ways that the program should be updated to be more responsive to the immediate needs of youth that are currently being served. While the model takes an innovative approach, it has not been updated since its initial rollout in 2012. **Convene stakeholders to update the program model and budget.**

**Next STEPS:** Next STEPS, abruptly shuttered in 2023, placed credible messenger mentors in 15 NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing sites to engage youth before arrest for serious offenses. Next STEPS was the only DOP program which intervened in the lives of young people *whether or not* they were or ever had been involved in the criminal justice system, instead focusing on young people who were at risk of such involvement.<sup>8</sup> Over an eight-year period, the program served hundreds of teens in high-incarceration developments like the Polo Grounds Towers in Harlem and Tompkins Houses in Bedford Stuyvesant, using an eleven-month curriculum of intensive mentoring, journaling, and group workshops on communication, goal-setting, and handling conflict.<sup>9</sup> Many participants were children with high risk factors for future systems involvement—approximately 50% were already justice involved—but what made the program unique was it also served young people at risk of future juvenile justice system

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Lynch, Nan Marie Astone, Juan Collazos, Micaela Lipman, Sino Esthappan. *Arches transformative mentoring program. An Implementation and Impact Evaluation in New York City*. Urban Institute. 2018.: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/arches-transformative-mentoring-program>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Please see, Jessie Mitchell, “Concerns rise after New York City Department of Probation cuts program for at-risk youth,” November 17, 2023: <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-city-probation-department-cuts-next-steps-program/#:~:text=Jackson%20received%20a%20letter%20from,sites%20with%20Next%20STEPS%20branches>

<sup>9</sup> CASES, “Next STEPS Youth Go Bowling,” July 26, 2018: <https://www.cases.org/2018/07/26/next-steps-youth-go-bowling-with-community-police-officers/#:~:text=games%2C%20and%20unlimited%20pizza%20at,who%20patrol%20these%20housing%20developments>

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

involvement.<sup>10</sup> Despite these successes, Next STEPS was abruptly cut in late 2023, with providers and participants receiving less than one week of notice that the program would be ending.<sup>11</sup> The program cost just \$2.5 million annually to serve over 200 young people. **There is no budget line for NextSTEPS in FY27.**

***Recommendation:*** Restore the program with \$5 million in funding to provide for expansion to additional NYCHA developments and to give additional funding for each site to allow for full-time, appropriately compensated staff. Conduct a new analysis of NYCHA sites to determine the highest need developments and site the program accordingly. **The recommended budget for this program is \$5 million.**

***Parent Support Services.*** This program engages “Parent Coaches” as credible messengers who provide peer-based support to families involved in the juvenile justice system. Parent Coaches are community members—ideally parents—who have lived experience with challenges similar to those facing the families they serve. Their firsthand knowledge of neighborhood-specific issues and the juvenile justice process allows them to offer informed, empathetic guidance. They help families understand and meet court-assigned requirements, including conditions such as substance abuse treatment, and assist caregivers in navigating available resources. Through this peer-driven model, the program strengthens family engagement and promotes more effective, community-rooted support for youth.

***Recommendation:*** This is a highly effective program model that has been severely underfunded by the Department of Probation. Funding must be expanded to allow for organizations to employ several full-time parent coaches as well as allow for broader OTPS funding that would go to funding community building events as well as psychoeducational groups.

### **Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice**

***Alternatives to Incarceration/Alternative to Detention:*** Alternatives to incarceration (ATI) programs offer community-based supervision and services instead of jail or prison sentences, aiming to reduce the reliance on incarceration and provide individualized supports for participants. These programs can include a variety of options such as drug and mental health treatment, vocational and educational training, community service, and cognitive behavioral interventions, tailored to an individual’s needs. **The proposed FY27 funding for ATI/ATDs (including non-youth specific programs) is \$51,065,768.**

***Recommendation:*** Alternatives to Incarceration not only keep people out of jails and prisons, but connect them to supports and services that allow people to begin to thrive in community. For young people, these supports can alter the trajectory of their lives and set them up for success. However, to provide consistent and holistic programming for young people, the City must invest in a much higher per youth cost. The most recent ATI RFP had an average cost per youth of \$4,482, while most ATIs for youth and emerging adults is approximately \$20,000 per youth per program. When compared to the cost of youth detention, which has been estimated between \$500,000 and nearly \$1 million per youth per year,<sup>12</sup> this is a small investment in programming that has a significant impact.

<sup>10</sup>Please see, Jessie Mitchell, “Concerns rise after New York City Department of Probation cuts program for at-risk youth,” November 17, 2023: <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-city-probation-department-cuts-next-steps-program/#:~:text=Jackson%20received%20a%20letter%20from,sites%20with%20Next%20STEPS%20branches>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Yoder, “New York Legislators Say They Want Alternatives to Costly Youth Prisons” *Imprint News*, January 2, 2021: <https://imprintnews.org/justice/juvenile-justice-2/new-york-legislators-want-alternatives-youth-prisons/50607>.

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

The City should also expand the number of slots available to young people overall, working with providers to shape RFPs and best practices for working with youth.

**Families Rising Program:** Families Rising is one such Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) program serving *specifically* 13-27 year olds with open cases in the adult court system. The program was designed to divert teens and young adults away from justice system involvement toward positive life choices, including education and career development. The program uses the evidence-based model Functional Family Therapy (FFT), working with young people and their families in their homes, to reduce family conflict, substance use, recidivism, and violent behavior in the long term. Through strengthening family relationships, the young person is less dependent on peers and feels more supported to address challenging situations.

**Recommendation:** We recommend doubling the funding for the program to expand Families Rising and allow providers to better support family court cases directly. While the program can follow cases to family court, funding through ACS would allow the program to officially operate as an alternative to detention program, and support with lessening overcrowding in Crossroads and Horizons. The need for Families Rising services in family court in all five boroughs is absolutely critical to supporting young people with being allowed to remain safely in the community during their ongoing court proceedings. Additionally, the program, as currently funded, frequently has very long waitlists: As of November 2025, the program has a three-month waitlist in both the Bronx and Queens. Additional funding to expand hiring in boroughs with the highest youth arrests would allow Families Rising to serve more young people and in a more timely manner.

**Community Justice Reentry Network (CJRN):** Community Justice Reentry Network is a citywide reentry initiative offering a combination of discharge planning, transitional employment, job training, access to higher education, and holistic supportive services for justice system-involved individuals. It builds on a four-year Demonstration Pilot (2016-2020) known as the Youth Reentry Network—created and operated by Youth Justice Network together with multiple partner organizations—launched to meet young adults within 48 hours of their admission to Rikers Island; and the Jails to Jobs initiative, to ensure that individuals leaving custody are connected to internships/work within the earliest weeks upon release. **The proposed FY27 funding for CJRN is \$20 million.**

**Recommendation:** Current year allocation of \$20,000,000 is set to expire on June 30, 2025. As the population in custody has continued to increase since 2021, and in order to offer meaningful support to special populations – including teenagers, emerging and vulnerable adults – this figure must be doubled to \$40,000,000. **The recommended funding for this program is \$40 million.**

### Human Resources Administration

**Work Progress Program (WPP):** WPP is a subsidized work experience initiative designed to complement existing youth services programs by providing participating low-income young adults with paid work experiences. Through WPP, HRA reimburses providers for wages or stipends paid to low-income youth and emerging adults ages 16-24 who have been placed in short-term work experiences that typically last 12 weeks, with a special emphasis on serving opportunity youth (i.e., young people who are out of school and out of work) and young people who are at risk of becoming opportunity youth.

**Recommendations:** Expand funding to serve more young people and include funding to cover the expenses (other than the direct payment to participants). Programs are currently run at a deficit for nonprofits because expenses like payroll fees, staff time to administer the program, and indirect costs are not covered.

# THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

## Department of Education and Supports Supports for Court Involved Youth in New York City Public Schools (NYCPS)

**Passages Academy:** NYCPS' Passages Academy within District 79 (Alternative Schools and Programs) operates across seven sites serving youth in both secure and non secure detention as well as in placement settings. Students in non-secure settings receive education at community-based sites where providers are responsible for escorting youth to school. At Horizon and CrossRoads, Passages provides education on site. An April 2025 Oversight of Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Centers audit by the Office of the New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli found that both facilities exhibited chronic absenteeism levels across all educational programs and ages, ranging from 13-73 days absent and that only a fraction of students entitled to special education services received them.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, a November 2025 Reconnecting to Opportunity Advancing Educational Equity for Court-Involved Students data brief by Advocates for Children of New York found that one in six students with disabilities did not receive their legally required Special Education Plan within 30 school days of enrolling at Passages Academy.<sup>14</sup>

**Recommendation:** Increase the number of educators and transition specialists that are assigned to secure detention facilities to ensure that every young person leaves with a concrete education plan, and receives the support and guidance necessary to seek appropriate special education and alternative services. The City must ensure that students are receiving instruction through Passages every single day.

**Judith S. Kaye Transfer High School (JSK):** JSK opened its doors in September 2017. Students who attend JSK are dually enrolled at the School of Cooperative Technical Education (Co-Op Tech) in Manhattan and Queens. JSK was designed to meet the needs of young people who become disengaged from school and welcomes young people involved in the criminal and juvenile justice systems and other over-age eighth graders with a particular focus on young people who are not on track to graduate from high school (for example, 16 and 17 year olds who have 10 or fewer credits). JSK offers multiple, individualized pathways to success including a regents high school diploma, High School Equivalency, and access to Career and Technical Education certifications and internship opportunities. The existing sites have seen remarkable success in enrolling, retaining, and producing good final outcomes for students and with a remarkable lack of disciplinary issues.

**Recommendation:** Strengthen the educational, mental health and social and emotional supports and services for youth who with justice involvement while in detention, in placement and upon exiting and reentering communities. Explore expanding models like JSK to the Bronx and Brooklyn. Reinstate funding for schools to partner with community-based providers to bring credible messenger mentors on-site for individual and group mentoring sessions. This model was implemented in the initial JSK site in Manhattan with Arches, shortly after the school opened, to further support young people who have been disconnected from school.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**CENTRALIZE COORDINATION:** Establish a citywide Coordinator of Youth and Emerging Adult Justice with authority to ensure consistent communication and collaboration among the multiple agencies that provide services for justice-involved youth and emerging adults. The Coordinator shall be responsible for collecting and analyzing data from all relevant agencies including New York Police Department

<sup>13</sup> Office of the State Comptroller, "Oversight of Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Centers," April 10, 2025: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-agencies/audits/2025/04/10/oversight-horizon-and-crossroads-juvenile-centers>.

<sup>14</sup> Advocates for Children of New York, "Data Brief: Reconnecting to Opportunity," November 2025: [https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/reconnecting\\_to\\_opportunity.pdf](https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/reconnecting_to_opportunity.pdf)

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

(NYPD), DOP, ACS, DYCD, and the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and information sharing from and between each of the five District Attorneys as well as the Office of Court Administration. The coordinator shall also establish formal mechanisms for input from citywide youth justice stakeholders including young people, families, service providers, law enforcement, and public defenders. Based on this input and data analysis, the Coordinator will identify gaps in services and work with city agencies to address them with robust evidence-informed programming.

**REBUILD THE DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION:** Appointed by New York City Mayor Eric Adams in 2023, current Probation Commissioner Juanita Holmes—an NYPD veteran with no probation, youth or social work background—has fully abandoned the prior twelve years of deep community investment and trust-building that occurred under Commissioners Shiraldi and Bermudez, with devastating consequences. She has reshaped the agency into a quasi-police precinct, requiring officers to wear uniforms, badges, and carry weapons while sidelining community-based initiatives like Arches and Next STEPS. During this period, DOP has seen a spike in rearrests and technical violations along with the worst staff attrition rate of any city agency. It is time to reverse course, restore the department’s core purpose, and rebuild an agency focused on true rehabilitation of individuals under supervision through intensive, individualized programming, and focused on offering supports and opportunities that strengthen surrounding communities.

**ADDRESS QUALITY OF CONTRACTS:** New York City’s contract issues continue to hamper the ability of organizations to deliver quality services. Contracts are not registered on time and do not consistently include cost escalators or account for inflation. RFP timelines are often too short—sometimes with a turnaround of less than a week—and agencies do not consistently provide opportunities for organizations to give feedback on program design prior to RFP issuance. Additionally, agencies do not consistently communicate clearly around contract extensions and modifications, leaving organizations unable to plan for the future of their contracts.

Many community-based organizations (CBOs) have been forced to reject certain contracts due to structural flaws — including service gaps, unrealistically low staff salaries that hinder recruitment and retention, and deliverables that exceed existing capacity – these flaws would be solved if the agency sought CBO feedback when designing new programs and preparing RFPs. Contracting delays at agencies are also severe: in FY24, over 85% of all City contracts with nonprofits were registered late.<sup>15</sup> Contracts also consistently undervalue youth work, requiring CBOs to pay very low salaries for staff, particularly for social workers which leads to staff turnover and an inability to retain and promote quality staff.

To stabilize the system, we are recommending that all program budgets should be expanded in order to keep pace with inflation, the increased cost of staff salaries and indirect costs, and minimum wage increases. This should include a cost of living increase annually across all staff lines. It should also prioritize consumer-centered outreach by empowering CBOs to directly enroll youth onsite and by launching community-based application and enrollment facilitators to expedite access to afterschool and summer programs. Finally, the City must pay youth service providers on time, resolve outstanding payments, fully staff agency invoicing and payment divisions, and make permanent the policy allowing providers to batch multiple months of invoices. While this is especially true in DCYD contracting, it should apply to nonprofit contracts across the youth service space.

**ADVANCE WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION:** ATI and reentry service programs are severely understaffed and face high turnover due to the low wages common in human services. Budget constraints and narrowly defined contracts often prevent programs from offering living

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<sup>15</sup> See Annual Contracts Report, NYC Comptroller Office, January 30, 2024: <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/annual-contracts-report/>

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

wages or hiring essential staff such as credible messengers, peer support specialists, and youth mentors—roles critical to participant engagement and program success.

For programs serving individuals with mental illness or trauma, recruiting and retaining licensed clinical staff is especially difficult. Many clinicians leave for the private sector, where salaries are far more competitive. This challenge is even greater for youth service providers, whose contracts set wages lower than those in adult ATI and reentry programs, despite the additional expertise required to work with youth. Contracts also fail to recognize the importance of hiring staff with lived experience—individuals who are employed as credible messengers but are often asked to work on part-time contracts while their work is central to many programs. Additional funding is required to ensure that these critical positions can be full-time employment.

To address these issues, City contracts should establish a wage floor of \$60,320 or \$29/hr<sup>16</sup> for human services workers, with annual cost-of-living increases tied to inflation. The City should also create incentives to help programs retain licensed clinical professionals, including psychiatrists and social workers, who might otherwise be drawn to private-sector opportunities.

**DOUBLE FUNDING FOR THE CITY COUNCIL COURT-INVOLVED YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE:** The Council’s Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative, currently funded at \$3.4M, provides essential, flexible funding to community-based providers. This funding supplements existing programs, allowing providers to innovate and build cross-organizational partnerships by convening funded providers regularly. This funding should be doubled, so currently funded organizations can grow their work and new organizations can be added.

**FUND PREVENTION AND DIVERSION TO SCALE:** To begin to scale youth services, funding for programs across every agency that currently provides services and supports to youth and young adults with juvenile justice and/or criminal legal systems involvement must be tripled. The rationale here is fourfold: a) Funding increases would support better program stability by allowing providers to not have to gap-fill contracts that have vastly underestimated the cost per participant of providing services to young people that need a higher level of care and staff time; b) relatedly, young people require access to robust wraparound services and supports, including incentives that cover transportation and feeding young people in program, but also provide for emergency funds for clothing and other basic necessities; these costs are higher for young people because of the tailored supports and thus need to be reflected in higher OTPS expenses; c) the City must shore up the sustainability of these programs by creating investments for infrastructure development, rising rental costs, and cost of insurance for programs that has continued to rise at exponential rates over the last decade; and, d) programs should receive funding specified for research, monitoring, and evaluation to collect, review, and analyze data on programs and outcomes, allowing for service providers to assess strengths, weaknesses and gaps and pivot where necessary. Overall, tripling funding will allow programs to rightsize and scale, leading to robust programming for nearly double the young people programs are currently serving.

**COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH IN DETENTION:** Youth detained pre-trial must have access to comprehensive educational, vocational, recreational and other enrichment programs whether in the care of ACS or DOC. This includes consistent, daily access to high school instruction for any student who does not have a high school diploma or GED; adequate services for students with disabilities; and regular reporting on attendance. Students who have completed high school must have access to college and vocational training and all youth must receive robust arts, social emotional, recreational, and other programming outside of school hours. Programming for detained

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<sup>16</sup> CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance, “Amid an uncertain economy, human services lead job growth—but wages threaten the sector’s long-term strength,” July 22, 2025: See <https://islg.cuny.edu/blog/human-services-job-growth>

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

youth must be coordinated across agencies to ensure adequate funding and consistent attendance across all facilities and successful educational placement upon release. Additionally, there are 1,278 18-25 year olds at Rikers as of November 2025 (nearly 20% of the detained population), which is a significant number of young people who could benefit from services. In 2023, the Adams administration cut \$17 million in funding for community-based providers running programs and services on Rikers Island. While the administration moved to restore \$14 million, the full amount and scope of those programs has not.

**MAKING NEW YORK CITY A “ZERO YOUTH DETENTION” CITY:** If New York City was to truly invest in the services and supports necessary to bring to scale a robust network of providers at every intercept from prevention programs that support mentoring, youth counseling, peer support and education to intervention programs that can provide wraparound, holistic community-based alternatives to detention and placement, New York City could adopt the goal of reaching a policy of “zero youth detention.” Over the last decade, several jurisdictions<sup>17</sup> have pledged to make this the aim of youth justice policy. By scaling a continuum of community-based responses, New York City can provide strength-based, effective solutions that help youth remain safely in their homes and communities.

**ENSURE NYPD DIVERSION:** Each NYPD precinct should adopt a “youth diversion plan” establishing a set of offenses for which pre-arrest diversion is the preferred option for youth under 26. The plan should include a list of community-based referral partners, youth diversion guidance and training for all uniformed officers, and quarterly reporting on the number of youth diverted.

**EXPAND PROGRAMS FOR GUN DIVERSION:** Expanding diversion for youth with gun-possession cases is imperative because punitive, one-size-fits-all responses neither enhance public safety nor address the underlying drivers of youth firearm carrying. Most young people who carry guns do so for protection, peer norms, or trauma-related fears and aggressive prosecution often exacerbates these risks by disrupting school and employment pathways, increasing justice-system involvement, and eroding trust in public safety institutions. Expanding pathways to diversion preserves opportunities for positive development and allows the City to invest in interventions proven to reduce violence, such as community-based outreach, trauma-responsive services, and targeted engagement for youth at maximum risk. Programs like Queens Community Justice Center’s trauma and healing program, which is funded by DOHMH, and the Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention Program (BOGAP), are models that should be expanded. The City should 1) make diversion presumptive for youth gun-possession cases, especially for youth with no prior record, 2) expand specialized diversion pathways for fund possession; and 3) pair diversion with access to counseling, mentoring programs, conflict-mediation programs, and supportive services that address the real reasons youth seek firearms.

**EXPAND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH:** Youth employment is especially critical for justice-involved young people because it strengthens both their educational and life trajectories while directly reducing their risk of further system involvement. We must ensure that all programs that serve youth with criminal legal system involvement have comprehensive workforce development components that provide the opportunity for young New Yorkers to gain skills and earn income. We believe that youth employment is a powerful public safety strategy: reducing idle time and promoting a sense of purpose and responsibility. Through socio-emotional skill development and access to positive peer and adult networks, participants gain tools and relationships that lead to re-engagement with schools and better court outcomes.

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<sup>17</sup> See Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention, “The Road Map to Zero Youth Detention,” n.d.: <https://regionalgunviolencephskc.com/vision/road-map/>; and Alice Green, “We need better alternatives to locking up kids,” *Times Union*, December 9, 2022: <https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Commentary-We-need-better-alternatives-to-17638128.php>

## THE NYC YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

Agency	Program	FY26 Budget (as of 11/25)	FY27 Budget*	Recommended FY27
ACS	MAAP	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000
ACS	ACES	***	***	DOUBLE LINE BUDGET
ACS	Family Court ATD	\$15,453,572	\$30,175,904†	\$30,175,904†
DOE	Judith S. Kaye Transfer	N/A	N/A	N/A
DOP	NeON Works	\$2,575,000	\$2,575,000	\$3,200,000
DOP	WorksPlus	\$2,659,253	\$846,400	\$3,700,000
DOP	Adolescent Portable Therapy	\$130,000	N/A	\$130,000
DOP	Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM)	\$2,079,639	\$2,079,639	\$3,079,639
DOP	Arches	\$3,421,705	\$3,421,705	\$3,421,705
DOP	IMPACT	N/A	N/A	\$4,100,000
DOP	NextSTEPS	N/A	N/A	\$5,000,000
DYCD	Comprehensive After School System (COMPASS)	\$927,719,588	\$1,471,817,148	\$1,471,817,148
DYCD	Violence Intervention: CMS/CVI	\$60,417,876	\$56,411,682	\$60,417,876
DYCD	Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program AGVEP	\$5,114,227	\$5,012,369	\$8,114,227
DYCD	DYCD Youth Enrichment Services	N/A	\$7,584,063	\$8,584,063
DYCD	ATLAS	\$29,553,926	\$24,068,473	\$59,107,852
HRA	Works Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
MOCJ	Alternatives to Incarceration/Alternative to Detention	\$51,065,768	\$53,710,683~	\$53,710,683

\* As outlined in the November Budget (2025)

† ACES and Family Court ATD fall under the same budget line, which we were not able to parse. In the FY26 approved budget that line was doubled. We support that increase.

~ This line represents the entire budget line for ATIs and thus does not represent the number going into youth services specific to young people under 18

**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: Patricia Williams

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

I represent: NYC Department of Probation

Address: 33 Beaver Street

**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: 2/19/2006

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Boyd

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

I represent: NYC Dept. of Correction

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd.

**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: 2/19/2006

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Conroy

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

I represent: NYC Dept. of Correction

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd.

**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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chelsea Chard

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

I represent: NYC Dept of Correction

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd

**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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nell Colon

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

I represent: NYC Dept. of Correction

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd

**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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stanley Richards

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

I represent: New York City Department of Correction

Address: 75-20 Astoria Blvd

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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeanette Merrill

Address: 55 Water St. New York NY

I represent: NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional

Address: Health 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: 2-19-26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Keisi Burgess

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

I represent: cutting car and signing out

Address: 201A E 124th Street

**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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dalynia K Powell - President

Address: 2510 Washington Ave

I represent: United Probation Officers Association

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: Molly Skthoner

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

I represent: MOC

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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eduardo Rodriguez

Address: 226 Beach 32nd Street 2nd Floor Far Rockaway

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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brian Carmichael

Address: Manhattan, NY

I represent: Freedom Agenda

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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darren Mack

Address: 40 Rector St. NY NY 10006

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: 2-19-26

(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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL KLINGER

Address: 177 LIVINGSTON

I represent: BLOOMING DEFENDER

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: Joshua Young DEP Commissioner

Address: 33 Bleecker

I represent: PROBATION

Address: 33 Bleecker

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0246-2026 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patrick Stephens

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Center for Community Alternatives

Address: 115 Jefferson St Syracuse 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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY GRADING

Address: 3000 MARCUS AVE LINDENHURST

I represent: UPCA

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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Antonio Pullano

Address: 33 Beaver St

I represent: Department of Probation

Address: 33 Beaver St

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ZACHARY KATZELSON

Address: 121 6TH AVE NYC 10013

I represent: INDEPENDENT RIKERS Commission

Address: SEE 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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maria Colosi

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

I represent: New York County Defender Services

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: Michael Rock

Address: 432 E 149<sup>th</sup> St

I represent: Bronx Connect

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: Gregory Shervill

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

I represent: for ATT Coalition

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: Nadia Chait

Address: 4 West 125

I represent: CASES

Address: 4 West 125

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: Roslyn Morrison

Address: 120-46 Queens Blvd

I represent: The Legal Aid Society Community Justice

Address: 120-46 Queens Blvd Unit

**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: 2/18/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Uzoma "Zo" Okechigwa

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

I represent: Emerge Groer

Address: 8 W 126th 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: Y JENNINGS

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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Damiane Riviere

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn NY, 11203

I represent: Center For Community alternatives

Address: 179 Livonia Ave Bklyn NY / 59 Chapel St, Bklyn

**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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Richards

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

I represent: NYC Dept of Probation

Address: 33 Beaver St. 18 Fl 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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tiffany N. Bell

Address: [Redacted] Queens Village NY 11472

I represent: NYC Department of Probation

Address: 33 BEAVER Street 73rd floor 1004

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: 02-19-26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SHARUN GODWIN

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: 2/19/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deldreana Peterkin

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

I represent: NYC Department of Probation

Address: 33 Beaver Street NYC

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 2.19.26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nora Daniel

Address: 1 Centre Street, Suite 1012

I represent: NYC Inmate's office of (Prison)

Address: Same

**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: 2/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deanna Logan

Address: 1 Centre Street

I represent: Mayor's office of Criminal Justice

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: WAYNE MCKENZIE

Address: 33 Renner St.

I represent: DOJ

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: 2-19-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTOR M. HERRERA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ 1005 E. 117th St NY 11417

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

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in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carlos Jones

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

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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