

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

----- X

May 3, 2022  
Start: 10:05 a.m.  
Recess: 12:46 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 3

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Tiffany Cabán  
Crystal Hudson  
Linda Lee  
Chi A. Ossé  
Lincoln Restler  
Kevin C. Riley  
Althea V. Stevens  
Sandra Ung  
Gale A. Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S

Johnny Grima  
Chow Nieves  
Marcus Moore  
Gary Jenkins, DSHS Commissioner  
Joslyn Carter, DHS Commissioner  
Shane Cox, DHS Assistant Commissioner for  
Partnerships, Capacity Building, and Strategy  
Karim Walker  
Ashley Belcher  
Shams de Baron  
Jacquelyn Simone  
Joshua Goldfein  
Catherine Trapani  
Tierra Labrada  
Patrick Boyle  
Lauren Galloway  
Deborah Berkman  
Gabriela Sandoval Requena  
Beatrice Simpkins  
Nicole McVinua  
Craig Hughes  
Camilla Broderick  
Sanne Wright  
Towaki Komatsu

2 SERGEANT LUGO: PC recording is started.

3 SERGEANT HOPE: Thank you. Cloud recording  
4 started.

5 Good morning, and welcome to the New York  
6 City Council Remote Hearing on the Committee on  
7 General Welfare. At this time, would all panelists  
8 please turn on your videos? I repeat, all panelists  
9 please turn on your videos. Thank you.

10 To minimize disruption, please place all  
11 electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode. Thank  
12 you.

13 If you wish to submit testimony, you may  
14 do so via email at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). I  
15 repeat, [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

16 Chair, we are ready to begin.

17 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Good morning  
18 everyone and welcome to today's Committee on the  
19 General Welfare hearing.

20 Today, the Committee will hold an  
21 oversight hearing on unsheltered homelessness in New  
22 York City. As of the 2021 Hope Count, there were  
23 2,376 individuals experiencing unsheltered  
24 homelessness in New York City. These numbers like do  
25 not accurately reflect the number of individuals

2 living on the streets and in the subways and the  
3 total number is likely much higher than the  
4 statistics indicate. We know that those experiencing  
5 unsheltered homelessness have higher rates of  
6 physical health issues, mental and behavioral issues,  
7 and substance use disorders. Among them, many are  
8 chronically homeless, having lived on the street or  
9 the subway for at least 9 months of the past 2 years.  
10 These individuals have more entrenched needs with  
11 their physical and mental health conditions being  
12 complicated by years of living on the streets without  
13 access to routine medical, mental health, and dental  
14 care. There is a valid mistrust of others and of  
15 government among these individuals, many who are  
16 often less responsive to government services and  
17 outreach. What we need as a city is to develop  
18 rapport and trust with individuals experiencing  
19 unsheltered homelessness, and we need to have an  
20 actual plan to support these individuals moving into  
21 permanent affordable and supportive housing. Removing  
22 these individuals off the street without any  
23 substantially safe place to house them is simply  
24 inhumane and shortsighted. Pushing them into  
25 congregate settings where they have already declined

2 placement for many reasons, including safety  
3 concerns, is not a plan. Today, the Committee would  
4 like to hear more about encampment sweeps and the  
5 Subway Safety plan, including how many who have been  
6 removed are still staying in shelter or a permanent  
7 housing setting. I was pleased to hear of the  
8 administration's plan to open up additional Safe  
9 Haven and Stabilization beds. Today, we want to hear  
10 more details about the plan, including what the  
11 timeline is for opening and how many new beds will be  
12 available. We want to learn more about how the  
13 administration is working to ensure that the needs  
14 are met of persons with disabilities and those with  
15 pets who are currently experiencing unsheltered  
16 homelessness. Today, we will also be hearing several  
17 bills including 2 bills, Intros 211 and 212, which I  
18 have cosponsored. Both of my bills would require  
19 reporting on the utilization of temporary emergency  
20 housing across all city-administered facilities.  
21 These bills would make it easier to understand the  
22 scope of homeless services in New York City and  
23 better assess gaps that may exist.

24

25

2 Thank you to the advocates, members of  
3 the public, and those who have lived experience who  
4 are joining us remotely today.

5 Thank you to representatives from the  
6 administration for joining us.

7 I look forward to hearing from all of you  
8 on all of these critical issues. At this time, I'd  
9 like to acknowledge my Colleagues. I see Council  
10 Member Ung, I see Council Member Caban, I see Council  
11 Member Lee. I believe some of the Colleagues are at a  
12 press conference. There was some really big news that  
13 was leaked yesterday, and so some Members will be  
14 joining us momentarily.

15 Finally, I would like to thank the  
16 Committee staff who have worked so hard to prepare  
17 for this hearing today, Aminta Kilawan, Crystal Pond,  
18 Julia Haramis, Rose Martinez, Nicholas Montalbano,  
19 and my staff, Michelle Cruz, Deputy Chief of Staff.

20 I was going to call on Council Member  
21 Aviles, but I believe that she is not yet with us.  
22 With that, I will pass it over to the Moderator.

23 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
24 Chair Ayala. Good morning, everyone. I am Aminta  
25 Kilawan, Senior Counsel for the Committee on General

2 Welfare for the New York City Council. I'm going to  
3 be moderating today's hearing.

4 Before we begin, I want to go over a few  
5 procedural matters. I'll be calling on panelists to  
6 testify. I want to remind everyone that you will be  
7 on mute until you are called and then you are going  
8 to be unmuted. Please listen for your name to be  
9 called.

10 For everyone testifying today, please  
11 note that there may be a few seconds of a delay  
12 before you are unmuted, and we thank you in advance  
13 for your patience on that.

14 At today's hearing, the first panel will  
15 be comprised of members of the public followed by the  
16 administration followed by Council Member questions  
17 and then additional members of the public will  
18 testify.

19 During the hearing, if Council Members  
20 would like to ask a question, please use the Zoom  
21 raise hand function, and you will be called upon in  
22 order that you raised your hand.

23 Again, our first panel will be comprised  
24 of public testimony, and all public testimony will be  
25 limited to 2 minutes. After I call your name, please

2 wait a brief moment for the Sergeant-at-Arms to  
3 announce that you may begin before you start your  
4 testimony.

5 Please also note that panelists will be  
6 able to register for this hearing until 3 hours into  
7 the hearing.

8 The first public panel in order of  
9 speaking will be Johnny Grima, Chow Nieves, and  
10 Marcus Moore.

11 I am now going to turn it over to our  
12 first panel beginning with Johnny Grima.

13 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

14 JOHNNY GRIMA: I would like to start by  
15 saying that there are more 200,000 vacant units in  
16 New York City so the Mayor's plan to make these Safe  
17 Haven is just perpetuating the housing crisis in New  
18 York City, that this is by design by wealthy real  
19 estate people and landlords and politicians such as  
20 Adams, Hochul, and others. Unfortunately, there's so  
21 much going on in my life with police harassment and  
22 violence against me, threats of violence by the  
23 police, that I don't really have time to focus on  
24 things like this, but the stress is difficult.



2 I guess I should probably speak about the  
3 Street Sweeps while I have some time. The NYPD have  
4 done to us like basically what they've always done to  
5 homeless people, which is just like brutalize them  
6 when they want them to move and destroy their  
7 belongs. It's very regular. As a matter of fact, as  
8 terrible as like the situations that me and my  
9 neighbors have been through in this last month or so,  
10 it would be so much worse I believe if there weren't  
11 cameras on us. It's disgusting to try to pitch and  
12 pull homeless people into congregate housing shelters  
13 for instance, but even the singles such as hotels and  
14 whatnot still have these rigid rules. There's no such  
15 thing as tenant's rights in these places. Staff can  
16 basically get you transferred over a bogus  
17 accusation. I believe even the shelters, they still  
18 scan you with a metal detector, you can only be gone  
19 for up to like 3 days without losing your bed. It's  
20 crazy. They can come in and check all your stuff. Why  
21 are homeless people being treated like terrorists or  
22 something? Why do we have to get treated like that?  
23 Especially when there's so many empty units in the  
24 city. To end homelessness in New York, you've got to

2 get rid of evictions too so those 2 things go  
3 together. I don't think...

4 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

5 JOHNNY GRIMA: Huh? Say that again.

6 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Time has expired,  
7 Johnny. Do you want to wrap up?

8 JOHNNY GRIMA: Yeah. Shelters and Safe  
9 Havens are abusive environments. There are more than  
10 200,000 vacant units in New York City compared to  
11 about 90,000 homeless people in the state. If they're  
12 looking for somewhere to put people, they don't have  
13 to look too hard because they have like 200,000  
14 options.

15 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you.

16 JOHNNY GRIMA: They shouldn't be building  
17 more Safe Havens and shelters.

18 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. Thank you,  
19 Johnny.

20 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
21 much, Johnny, for your testimony. I'm now going to  
22 call on Chow Nieves for testimony. Over to Chow.

23 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

24 CHOW NIEVES: My name is Chow Nieves. I am  
25 very blessed to be in an apartment on 159th Street,

2 and I moved in last month. I have been struggling  
3 with housing instability since I was 17 years old,  
4 and I will never forget my first night in the shelter  
5 because I was told that if I didn't want to take a  
6 shower in this dirty stall then I can go find  
7 somewhere else and it was the dead of night, and  
8 there have been many times where my safety and my  
9 hygiene has been compromised out of the convenience  
10 for a staff member. There have been many times where  
11 outreach or police officers have profiled me and  
12 they've treated me very foul because I'm homeless.  
13 They treat me as if I am somebody who struggles with  
14 substances and, even then, I think the people who  
15 come from those walks of life deserve a little  
16 compassion. We are running from a lot of pain and  
17 then we are put in environments ruled by people who  
18 are hungry for power and they hold your little bit of  
19 stability you have over your head as if it's a treat  
20 and they dehumanize us.

21 I'm only 24 years old and I finally have  
22 my home for myself and I am very privileged right  
23 now, but I fought for 7 years, and there are plenty  
24 of people who have fought longer than me and they  
25 have little to nothing still and it's very unfair. We

2 just deserve better than this. There's no reason why  
3 people should be coming out of abusive relationships  
4 or homes or coming from environments where they have  
5 nothing, just from the system to be brought into some  
6 sort of hell. People need help. Thank you.

7 SERGEANT LUGO: Time.

8 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you for  
9 sharing that, Chow, and congratulations on finally  
10 getting your new place. I hope that you're enjoying  
11 it, and I know that the journey there was not easy  
12 and took way too long, but I'm really excited for  
13 this new chapter in your life, and I want to thank  
14 you for being here today and really helping to bring  
15 a face to this issue and to continue to share your  
16 story. I think that's very powerful, and we welcome  
17 you today. Thank you.

18 CHOW NIEVES: Thank you.

19 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
20 much, Chow, for your testimony. I am going to now  
21 turn to Marcus Moore for testimony. Over to Marcus.

22 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time. Marcus, you  
23 may begin.

24 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: I think we are  
25 having some technical difficulties hearing Marcus at

2 this point. Marcus, it seems like your audio is a bit  
3 muffled.

4 MARCUS MOORE: Good morning (INAUDIBLE)

5 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Marcus, you may  
6 want to...

7 MARCUS MOORE: I will just (INAUDIBLE)

8 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Marcus, I  
9 don't know if you can hear me. Marcus, I don't know  
10 if you can hear me.

11 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Can we mute Marcus  
12 (INAUDIBLE) to get off and get back on?

13 MARCUS MOORE: (INAUDIBLE) do not really  
14 want to be sleeping in the street, right? We  
15 (INAUDIBLE) What about now? Do you hear me?

16 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Now we can  
17 actually hear you a little bit better but...

18 MARCUS MOORE: (INAUDIBLE) now? Hello.

19 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Hi, Marcus.  
20 Marcus, we're going to have to come back to you  
21 because for some reason...

22 MARCUS MOORE: (INAUDIBLE)

23 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay, can we hear  
24 from the next person? Aminta, you're muted.

2 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: At this point,  
3 we have concluded the first public panel. We're going  
4 to now move on to the second panel which will be  
5 members of the administration.

6 I'm now going to call on members of the  
7 administration to testify. DSS Commissioner Gary  
8 Jenkins and, for questions and answers, DHS  
9 Commissioner Joslyn Carter and DHS Assistant  
10 Commissioner for Partnerships, Capacity Building, and  
11 Strategy Shane Cox.

12 I am now going to read the oath, and,  
13 afterwards, I'll call on each panelist here from the  
14 administration to respond individually.

15 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
16 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
17 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
18 questions? Commissioner Jenkins.

19 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Yes.

20 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you. DHS  
21 Administrator Carter.

22 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: I do.

23 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you.  
24 Finally, DHS Assistant Commissioner Cox.

25 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: Yes, I do.

2 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you all.  
3 Commissioner Jenkins, you may begin when ready.

4 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you. Good  
5 morning. I want to thank the General Welfare  
6 Committee and Deputy Speaker Ayala for holding  
7 today's hearing and for the opportunity to testify  
8 about the Department of Homeless Services' work to  
9 support unsheltered New Yorkers.

10 My name is Gary P. Jenkins, and I am the  
11 Commissioner of the Department of Social Services. I  
12 am joined by Department of Homeless Services  
13 Administrator Joslyn Carter and DHS Assistant  
14 Commissioner for Partnership, Capacity Building, and  
15 Strategy Shane Cox. We look forward to updating the  
16 Committee today on the work of DHS and our partner  
17 agencies in addressing homelessness.

18 As Mayor Adams has stated and made clear  
19 from the beginning of this administration, every New  
20 Yorker deserves dignity and safety, and there is  
21 neither when living unsheltered. That is why we have  
22 been laser focused in implementing the Mayor's  
23 initiative to encourage vulnerable New Yorkers to  
24 come inside and off the streets and subways and enter  
25 safe settings with dedicated supports. This approach

2 is reinforced by our commitment to aggressively  
3 expand our low barrier of resources and capacity  
4 which was highlighted by the Mayor's recent  
5 announcement to allocate unprecedented resources for  
6 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. As part of  
7 this investment, the Adams' administration will add  
8 more than 170 million dollars in fiscal year 2023  
9 executive budget to provide high quality services for  
10 unsheltered New Yorkers. As mentioned, this will be  
11 the largest investment made by any city  
12 administration to fund and expand street outreach  
13 programs and low barrier programs. As announced by  
14 Mayor Adams, this investment will fund around 1,400  
15 low barrier, safe havens, and stabilization beds  
16 which will bring the total of these beds to over  
17 4,000, opening up more opportunities for our  
18 vulnerable neighbors to access our services and get  
19 the support they need.

20 This administration has already made  
21 significant progress on this commitment to increase  
22 the capacity of low barrier beds dedicated to serving  
23 New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness as  
24 part of the Subway Safety Plan. As of today, the city  
25 has opened new high quality sites which will offer



2 dedicated supports to more than 400 New Yorkers as  
3 part of nearly 500 specialized beds announced in the  
4 plan earlier this year. More than 100 beds are  
5 expected to come online in the coming months,  
6 exceeding the goal originally announced in the plan.  
7 The city will fund nearly 900 more beds, bringing the  
8 total number of new capacity funded by this  
9 investment to more than 1,400 beds. The Mayor's  
10 recent announcement includes 19 million to create 3  
11 additional drop-in centers in addition to funding for  
12 specialized staff such as nurses, psychiatrists, and  
13 social workers to support the well-being of our  
14 clients.

15           Lastly, 12 million of this investment  
16 will be allocated to DSS' expanded outreach programs,  
17 which will increase the number of staff conducting  
18 subway outreach and placements. Thus intensifying  
19 outreach and add transportation services and other  
20 resources to help streamline the process of  
21 connecting clients to placement opportunities.

22           As we begin our discussion today on  
23 unsheltered homelessness in New York City, we should  
24 acknowledge that the vast of majority of people  
25 experiencing homelessness in our city are sheltered

2 indoors across the shelter system because we have a  
3 right to shelter. That stands in stark contrast with  
4 other jurisdictions around the nation, particularly  
5 on the West Coast where the proportion of unsheltered  
6 individuals experiencing homelessness on the street  
7 is greater than in New York City. Our work to reach  
8 and support unsheltered New Yorkers happens each and  
9 every day, weekends and holidays, and at all hours of  
10 the day and night. Our approach to reaching and  
11 helping unsheltered New Yorkers is centered around  
12 building trust over multiple interactions. Work that  
13 is carried out with care and compassion by our staff  
14 and providers surveying our neighborhoods for  
15 unsheltered individuals in need. This work is deeply  
16 personal to me. As I've discussed with this Committee  
17 in the past, I, myself, experienced homelessness and  
18 spent time in a shelter as a child so I understand  
19 firsthand that our work changes lives and that we  
20 have a responsibility to provide our clients with the  
21 resources that they need to not just survive but to  
22 thrive in our city. We are safety net of last resort  
23 for many New Yorkers, and I take our responsibility  
24 to shelter our most vulnerable neighbors with the  
25 utmost seriousness.

2           Before we summarize our work to support  
3 unsheltered New Yorkers and our strategies to help  
4 those in need, I want to provide important background  
5 on DHS and homelessness.

6           DHS is committed to preventing and  
7 addressing homelessness across the 5 boroughs. Our  
8 staff and providers employ many innovative strategies  
9 to help individuals who are in temporary shelter or  
10 are unsheltered to come in off the streets and to  
11 successfully transition to permanency. The mission of  
12 DHS is to prevent homelessness when possible, address  
13 street homelessness, provide safe temporary shelter,  
14 and connect New Yorkers experiencing homelessness to  
15 suitable housing. We carry out this mission with care  
16 and compassion for each client and their  
17 circumstances.

18           We also remain committed to meeting our  
19 legal and moral mandates to provide temporary  
20 emergency shelter at request to all eligible New  
21 Yorkers who need it. Our staff and providers also  
22 help these individuals access a variety of social  
23 services, employment opportunities, work supports,  
24 and other public benefits. We also help clients  
25 increase their financial literacy in search for

2 permanent housing to ensure a seamless transition  
3 back to independent living and stability.

4           As we continue our discussion today, it  
5 is important to contextualize the environment in  
6 which we do this work. In recent years, New York City  
7 has seen significant decreases in affordable housing.  
8 In the decade between 2005 and 2015, household rents  
9 in New York City increased by 18.4 percent while at  
10 the same time incomes failed to keep pace, increasing  
11 by only 4.8 percent. Looking at affordable housing  
12 supply, between 1994 and 2012, the city suffered a  
13 net loss of about 150,000 rent stab stabilized units.  
14 As a result, by 2015, the city had insufficient  
15 housing for millions of low-income New Yorkers. These  
16 trends along with factors such as an economy that  
17 leaves too many living paycheck to paycheck, domestic  
18 violence, overcrowding, housing evictions, untreated  
19 mental health challenges, and inadequate discharge  
20 planning from mental health institutions and state  
21 correctional facilities have resulted in homelessness  
22 and displacement across the 5 boroughs over the past  
23 decades. While these challenges persist, we are  
24 steadily working to address the multifaceted drivers  
25 of homelessness.

2           Now I would like to walk the Committee  
3 through the multiprong strategies that we have in  
4 place to support New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered  
5 homelessness starting with our street outreach  
6 strategies.

7           These outreach strategies are proactive,  
8 and we are proud of the work our staff performs to  
9 actively identify and connect with vulnerable New  
10 Yorkers. Our outreach teams canvas the 5 boroughs 24  
11 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year as  
12 part of our efforts to identify and support  
13 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.  
14 Our strategies place trust at the center of our work.  
15 Building trust can take several years and often  
16 requires multiple interactions as encourage  
17 unsheltered New Yorkers to accept our services so  
18 they can in due course transition off the streets.  
19 Ending homelessness is a citywide effort, and we need  
20 everyone to pitch in to support the city's proactive  
21 outreach efforts. To all those New Yorkers who are  
22 listening, if you are travelling our streets,  
23 subways, and parks, I implore you to not just walk by  
24 a fellow New Yorkers who is unsheltered. Contact 311  
25 immediately and be part of the solution. If the

2 person appears to pose an immediate risk to  
3 themselves or others, New Yorkers should call 911 for  
4 assistance. This is a critical step in helping the  
5 city identify individuals experiencing unsheltered  
6 homelessness, and we ask that you inform your  
7 constituents about ways they can help by giving our  
8 collective responsibility to assist our neighbors in  
9 need. Once someone calls 311 to report an unsheltered  
10 New Yorker in need of assistance, a 311 service  
11 request is created. That service request is then  
12 routed to a social service provider or a partner  
13 agency which results in an outreach team being  
14 dispatched to the reported location. The outreach  
15 teams then locate that individual and, if found,  
16 directly engage the person, assess for safety, and  
17 encourage them to accept services and transition off  
18 the streets or subways.

19 To implement and organize our outreach  
20 work, the city the Homeless Outreach and Mobile  
21 Engagement Street Action Teams, or better known as  
22 HOMESTAT. Through this system, we have built the  
23 city's first by-name list of individuals who are  
24 known and currently engaged by HOMESTAT outreach  
25 teams and are confirmed to be experiencing

2 unsheltered homelessness. New Yorkers experiencing  
3 unsheltered homelessness face many barriers to  
4 transitioning indoors. Many of our unsheltered  
5 neighbors have fallen through various safety nets,  
6 experienced trauma, or are dealing with mental health  
7 or substance use challenges. All of these factors  
8 make New Yorkers our most vulnerable population. As  
9 mentioned, it can take multiple interactions and  
10 persistent and compassionate engagement to  
11 successfully encourage someone experiencing  
12 unsheltered homelessness to accept city services.  
13 Given these circumstances, it is important to  
14 understand that there is no one size fits all  
15 approach to ending homelessness. However, HOMESTAT  
16 and our approach allows our outreach teams to engage  
17 New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness  
18 person-by-person directly and repeatedly, working to  
19 gain their trust and ultimately encourage them to  
20 accept services.

21           Shifting to the services available to New  
22 Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness, I want  
23 to highlight the specialized facilities DHS oversees  
24 to support these individuals. Along with our  
25 providers, DHS operates drop-in centers,

2 stabilization beds, and safe havens, which provide  
3 low-barrier programs that specifically target  
4 individuals who may be resistant to accept our  
5 services or other services including traditional  
6 shelter. For the Committee's background, I want to  
7 provide a more detailed overview of these resources.

8           Drop-in centers offer baseline services  
9 with the goal of meeting immediate needs for  
10 unsheltered New Yorkers such as meals and showers.  
11 Drop-in centers have case management services on-site  
12 which provide an immediate option for individuals who  
13 want to transition off the streets.

14           In the case of safe havens, we provide  
15 traditional housing model with specialized overnight  
16 beds, more intimate and hands-on case management  
17 along with low-barrier program requirements. To build  
18 on the success of safe haven model, we have expanded  
19 the number of these specialized beds across the city  
20 with more coming online to support New Yorkers in  
21 need as highlighted by the Mayor's historical  
22 investment in low-barrier beds.

23           Lastly, like safe havens, stabilization  
24 beds are small scale and low barrier programs aimed  
25 at helping individuals experiencing unsheltered



2 homelessness who may be resistant to accepting  
3 services. Moreover, our stabilization beds are aimed  
4 for clients who are more able to live independently  
5 and include several services to ensure they are  
6 supported. These facilities are equipped with onsite  
7 services and staff who work closely with clients to  
8 build trust, stabilize their living circumstances,  
9 and encourage transitioning from unsheltered  
10 homelessness into permanent housing. The services  
11 provided here are frequently the first step in  
12 helping New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered  
13 homelessness on a path to stability, and we are proud  
14 of this work and the results we achieve each and  
15 every day.

16 Another key resource available to help  
17 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness is supportive  
18 housing, a model of affordable housing with  
19 supportive social services in place for individuals  
20 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These  
21 services are overseen by the Human Resources  
22 Administration's Office of Supportive and Affordable  
23 Housing and Services whose focus is on developing  
24 permanent housing solutions for formally homeless  
25 individuals. Our supportive housing teams work

2 closely with our partners to develop new housing  
3 programs and refer applicants to housing so they can  
4 stabilize their lives and improve their  
5 circumstances.

6           Now, I would like to shift to update the  
7 Committee on our recent initiatives taken on by this  
8 administration starting with our subway outreach  
9 efforts through which DHS and our provider  
10 organizations work to reach and support New Yorkers  
11 experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the subways.  
12 As Mayor Adams has stated, it is inhumane to allow  
13 our fellow New Yorkers to sleep and live on the  
14 subway. We must not turn a blind eye towards their  
15 plight. As part of this initiative, our outreach  
16 teams who are canvassing every day, day and night,  
17 have enhanced access to clinicians, providing  
18 outreach staff with new tools and resources to  
19 further strengthen our outreach efforts in the subway  
20 system. The Subway Outreach Initiative is centered  
21 around interagency and city and state collaboration  
22 with the aim to assist New Yorkers experiencing  
23 unsheltered homelessness in the subway. The  
24 initiative includes the following features.

2           Deploying joint response teams made up of  
3 DHS, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New  
4 York City Police Department, and community-based  
5 providers in high-need locations across the city.  
6 They work in partnership with the State's Safe Option  
7 Support outreach teams, also known as SOS teams,  
8 which consist of outreach workers and clinicians,  
9 incorporating medical services to individuals  
10 experiencing unsheltered homelessness, streamlining  
11 the placement process into supportive housing and  
12 minimizing the amount of paperwork required to show  
13 eligibility and, again, creating new drop-in centers  
14 to provide a direct route for New Yorkers to come  
15 indoors and exploring opportunities to place drop-in  
16 centers closer to the key subway stations to more  
17 seamlessly transition individuals indoors. Since the  
18 inception of this initiative, our teams have  
19 canvassed subway platforms, subway cars, transit  
20 hubs, and end-of-line subway stations to offer  
21 services and supports to New Yorkers experiencing  
22 unsheltered homelessness. When a person in the subway  
23 is engaged by an outreach team, they are evaluated to  
24 address their individualized needs, recognizing that  
25 there is no one size fits all solution to address the

2 circumstances that may have resulted in the person's  
3 homelessness. Our outreach staff and clinicians offer  
4 a range of services and supports. As we have  
5 previously stated, their efforts are all about  
6 repeated engagement to build trust with New Yorkers  
7 in need with the goal being to connect them to long-  
8 term permanent housing, mental health and substance  
9 use treatment and community-based services. For the  
10 Committee's awareness, every day, outreach teams  
11 conduct on average 700 engagements with individuals  
12 in need on the subway platforms, at prioritized end-  
13 of-line stations, and in subway cars. This does not  
14 include the ongoing work of responding to 311 calls  
15 and other outreach during the daytime hours which  
16 have reached thousands of New Yorkers. For these  
17 interactions, we can report that more than 700  
18 individuals accepted services into shelter. Our work  
19 continues, and we look forward to collaborating with  
20 our partners in and outside of government to help New  
21 Yorkers in need in our subway systems.

22           This administration is redoubling its  
23 efforts to serve and support New Yorkers experiencing  
24 unsheltered homelessness. The Mayor's recent  
25 initiatives are focused on encouraging vulnerable New

2 Yorkers to come in off the streets and subways and  
3 into safer settings. Additionally, this work is  
4 reinforced by this administration's commitment to  
5 aggressively expand our low-barrier resources such as  
6 safe havens and stabilization beds which are  
7 dedicated to serving this population and provide the  
8 critical capacity needed to bring individuals indoors  
9 and closer to support services.

10           Regarding the city's latest interagency  
11 collaboration efforts to address encampments, the  
12 Mayor has been clear from the onset that we are not  
13 going to abandon our neighbors who are suffering,  
14 particularly when the city has the ability to help  
15 and improve their conditions. It is our moral  
16 obligation to use the resources we have to help our  
17 fellow New Yorkers who are experiencing unsheltered  
18 homelessness and not just ignore our neighbors in  
19 need. It is critical that we provide services for our  
20 vulnerable neighbors who need our help, and, thanks  
21 to this initiative, our city will become more  
22 equitable for all. At each cleaning, DHS outreach  
23 teams are there on the ground to connect New Yorkers  
24 experiencing unsheltered homelessness with services  
25 and help facilitate the connection to provide

2 shelter, food, and support. As the Mayor has stated,  
3 we will not be deterred from offering the help and  
4 services to our unsheltered neighbors that they  
5 deserve and are entitled to, all while ensuring that  
6 our public spaces remain clear and clean and  
7 available to all. We appreciate the Committee, Deputy  
8 Speaker, recent acknowledgement about the  
9 effectiveness of our low-barrier programs such as  
10 safe havens and stabilization beds, which are  
11 specifically tailored to unsheltered individuals who  
12 may be resistant to accepting services or who may not  
13 be best served by other services including  
14 traditional housing settings. That is why, as of  
15 today, we have approximately 3,000 specialized beds  
16 dedicated to serving the unique needs of New Yorkers  
17 experiencing unsheltered homelessness. As I mentioned  
18 earlier, with the historical investment we are making  
19 including funding for around 1,400 low-barrier beds  
20 which will bring the total of these beds to over  
21 4,000, opening up more opportunities for our  
22 vulnerable New Yorkers and our neighbors to access  
23 our services and get the support they need and  
24 deserve.

2 We also want to take this opportunity to  
3 highlight the various shelter models used by DHS and  
4 our partners to support New Yorkers in need. All of  
5 our facilities from dormitory shelters to safe havens  
6 maintain strict protocols to ensure the safety of our  
7 clients. Our staff and providers receive the  
8 necessary training, some of which we have worked with  
9 the City Council to craft, to ensure that we have the  
10 tools and knowledge to address any safety concerns  
11 and deescalate matters in a professional manner.

12 Specifically looking at our dormitory settings and  
13 safety, all of our shelter sites have 24/7 security.  
14 We have cleared more than 90 percent of violations  
15 and have added tens of millions of dollars annually  
16 for programming for our clients to participate in.

17 Moving on to legislation, the bills being  
18 heard today present several ideas that we are  
19 reviewing. As we continue these discussions, we  
20 encourage the Committee to consider the fiscal and  
21 staffing resources that will be necessary to carry  
22 out these proposals and the impact on our agency's  
23 programming.

24 Intro 212 proposes to update Local Law 37  
25 of 2011, which requires a monthly report on emergency

2 housing assistance usage and require a cover page  
3 listing the total number of all individuals utilizing  
4 emergency housing. We look forward to discussing this  
5 proposal further with the bill's sponsor to ensure we  
6 present an accurate view of clients in DHS shelter  
7 and other emergency shelters while at the same time  
8 ensuring reporting does not duplicate preexisting  
9 requirements.

10 Intro 212 will require reporting on exits  
11 from city-administered facilities and financing  
12 starts and completions of permanent housing meant for  
13 individuals exiting these facilities. This bill  
14 presents similar challenges as Intro 212. We want to  
15 ensure the reporting required by this bill is not  
16 onerous or repetitive of existing requirements, and,  
17 again, we look forward to working with the sponsor to  
18 understand the intent.

19 Lastly, today's preconsidered  
20 introduction proposes that the Department of Homeless  
21 Services and Human Resources Administration track and  
22 report data on rental assistance programs. We are  
23 reviewing the legislation, and we look forward to  
24 discussing and clarifying the information being  
25 requested in this proposal with the goal being to



2 ensure the data's accuracy and efficiency. Based on  
3 the initial review as currently drafted, the bill  
4 would pose a substantial administrative burden on the  
5 agency as it requires resource-intensive data  
6 collection and seeks information that is anticipated  
7 to be untraceable.

8           As we close our testimony today, I want  
9 to briefly summarize our key takeaways on how the  
10 Adams' administration is working to address  
11 unsheltered homelessness across our city.  
12 Homelessness is a decades long challenge that has  
13 persisted due to many factors from stagnating wages  
14 and a lack of affordable housing, and the Adams'  
15 administration is laser focused on connecting  
16 unsheltered New Yorkers to the services they need to  
17 get back on their feet. Every New Yorkers and elected  
18 official share the responsibility of proactively  
19 helping unsheltered New Yorkers from taking a few  
20 minutes to contact 311 to help us identify an  
21 unsheltered neighbor to helping us find and site  
22 shelter facilities across the 5 boroughs. Our  
23 outreach teams are out in the field 24/7, 7 days a  
24 week, 365 days a year supporting New Yorkers  
25 experiencing unsheltered homelessness in our streets

2 and subways, and we are not leaving any stone  
3 unturned in our efforts to bring them indoors with  
4 the care and compassion they deserve.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
6 today about our efforts to address unsheltered  
7 homelessness in our city. We look forward to  
8 partnering with the City Council on these efforts,  
9 and I welcome any questions that you may have. Thank  
10 you.

11 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner. I want to acknowledge that we've been  
13 joined by Council Members Brewer, Stevens, Aviles,  
14 Osse, Hudson, and Restler, and that I want to give  
15 Council Member Aviles an opportunity to share remarks  
16 on her Intro today.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILES: Thank you so much  
18 to the Chair for the opportunity to provide remarks  
19 on this preconsidered Introduction, a bill that I am  
20 proudly the prime sponsor of, and a bill which has  
21 previously been brought before the Council, Intro  
22 1020 by then Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel.

23 As everyone in the room with me knows  
24 today, the city fighting homelessness and eviction  
25 prevention supplement is a critical rental assistance

2 program for families facing eviction and  
3 homelessness. This bill would require the Department  
4 of Homeless Services and HRA to track and report to  
5 the Council enrollment data on the FHEPS program. It  
6 is just common sense if we are going to accurately  
7 gauge the effectiveness of the program and further  
8 prevent New Yorkers from becoming homeless. Data will  
9 help us illuminate how best as policymakers we might  
10 strategize to prevent homelessness in our city and  
11 how we might modify the existing program to meet the  
12 needs of those enrolled.

13 In addition to the reporting data  
14 required in this bill, it would also us to see the  
15 impacts of recent rule changes like the one that  
16 occurred this past December that requires that the  
17 Department of Social Services to deduct utility  
18 allowance from the maximum rent that the housing  
19 vouchers cover, leaving New Yorkers who are facing  
20 eviction to overcome what very much is an unnecessary  
21 hurdle. As the Council Member representing District  
22 38, a largely immigrant community, I would propose  
23 one friendly amendment to the legislation before you  
24 today, and that is also to parse out data by primary  
25 language spoken by program participant. Adding this

2 additional layer of detail may help us better look at  
3 what populations are most at risk in our city. I look  
4 forward to hearing the feedback. I did hear the  
5 Commissioner mention concerns around a burden on the  
6 agency. Quite frankly, we should not be running any  
7 programs without sufficient data. This is just a  
8 fundamental element of all the programming, for us to  
9 make effective and efficient choices on what is  
10 functioning and producing the outcomes we need and  
11 what is not and so I look forward to hearing further  
12 feedback from the advocates and program recipients in  
13 the room today regarding this legislation.

14 Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to  
15 put forward remarks.

16 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
17 Council Member Aviles, for your opening statement. I  
18 am now going to turn it back to Chair Ayala for  
19 questions for the administration, and then, as a  
20 reminder, to Council Members who may have questions,  
21 you can use the Zoom raise hand function, and we will  
22 be limiting Council Member questions to 5 minutes.  
23 Over now to Chair Ayala.

24 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you. Thank  
25 you, Commissioner, for your testimony here today. I

2 think that this is an issue that obviously I get a  
3 lot of calls of concern about, and we wanted to make  
4 sure that specifically in light of everything that  
5 has been happening in the city that we were able to  
6 have this discussion as quickly as possible because  
7 we share concerns, and I want to just share for the  
8 viewing public that the Commissioner and I have had  
9 opportunities to have multiple discussions on this  
10 issue, and I believe that you genuinely want to be  
11 helpful and that you want to work collaboratively to  
12 try to find solutions that work, but I want to share  
13 an impact statement of my own.

14 I have a brother who has serious mental  
15 health issues, who's in and out of shelter because of  
16 that, and it becomes very difficult as many people  
17 who are viewing today may recognize when you're  
18 dealing with a person with mental health issues to  
19 keep them at home. Sometimes, I'm just not able to  
20 keep him with me because people would argue why don't  
21 you keep him. It's difficult. It is difficult for me.  
22 I could imagine that it's difficult for the staff,  
23 but, right now, he's living with me because he feels  
24 so unsafe living in the shelter system. He has been  
25 punched in the face by security guards because his

2 behavior has been erratic, which you would assume  
3 that there's adequate training in the staff to  
4 recognize mental illness, to treat individuals that  
5 have a mental illness, and how to approach them in a  
6 way that is useful. He has been threatened with a  
7 knife inside of the shelter system, and I'm talking  
8 about like a couple of days ago. This continues to  
9 happen, and this is why we hear from New Yorkers that  
10 are unsheltered day in and day out that they don't  
11 want to be in congregate settings, and so the concern  
12 for us is that if we don't have enough stabilized or  
13 safe haven beds available that we're going to see  
14 more and more displacement, and that's concerning.  
15 There are going to be a bunch of questions today. I  
16 think that people are alarmed, specifically with the  
17 number of raids in the subway stations, and we've all  
18 heard the stories, they're horrible, of people living  
19 in the tunnel. We recently had a couple that was  
20 killed on the tracks a couple of days ago that were  
21 living somewhere in the tunnel and no one knew and,  
22 unfortunately, we lost those 2 New Yorkers, and that  
23 shouldn't happen. That shouldn't happen in 2022. It  
24 should never happen, but this is where we are. I  
25 really wanted to hear from you today. I get the

2 encampment issue, and I think that this is the hot  
3 button issue that everybody's talking about because  
4 we've all seen the videos on social media with the  
5 breaking up of the encampments and what appears to  
6 the viewing public as a very aggressive policing  
7 tactic to get rid of homeless people that are living  
8 on the street. That concerns me. One, because my  
9 understanding is that there has to be adequate notice  
10 given to the individual that a cleaning crew will be  
11 coming by on such and such day at such and such hour  
12 to clean the encampment so that it allows the person  
13 enough time to take out their personal property  
14 without fear of having their birth certificate,  
15 social security numbers, Medicaid cards, medication  
16 thrown in the garbage, and we're not sure that that's  
17 happening so I wanted to hear from you what your  
18 sentiment is on what exactly is happening and how you  
19 feel the situation is going? Are we successful in  
20 placing people? I heard the number 700 at the press  
21 conference with the Mayor, and so I don't know that  
22 that number is accurate, and I wanted to hear from  
23 you on what your take on that was.

24 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you, Deputy  
25 Speaker, for your questions, and thank you for

2 acknowledging that this administration, I'm going to  
3 speak on behalf, as I always will, Mayor Adams, we  
4 definitely care about individuals who are homeless.  
5 We're not going to be the status quo of just walking  
6 by individuals and not addressing their mental health  
7 needs, their housing needs. That's not good  
8 government in any instance, and we're not going to be  
9 that type of government that's going to just promote  
10 that type of behavior. We know these are our  
11 neighbors. They're in our communities. They're  
12 somebody's brother, they're somebody's mother,  
13 they're somebody's uncle, they're somebody's  
14 relative, and they're our neighbors so, yes, I am  
15 committed as the Commissioner for the Department of  
16 Homeless Services to ensure that we are out there  
17 doing the outreach. The staff are committed. As I  
18 shared my story and I'm going to continue to share  
19 it, I was once homeless. I watched my mother of 8  
20 kids by herself struggle. It's not easy. There's a  
21 lot of challenges out there, and, as government, we  
22 need to be there for those individuals who need our  
23 assistance. Unfortunate with your brother with the  
24 incident in shelter. We work with our shelter  
25 providers. We work with our security. As I said in my



2 testimony, we do the de-escalation in the  
3 professional manner. We're continuously evaluating  
4 that process. When we hear of these incidents, we  
5 definitely look into them and we course correct and  
6 we take action when needed, but the vast majority of  
7 our shelters, I know in the papers it's like oh, it's  
8 not safe, 95 percent of our unsheltered population is  
9 in shelter. We're out there each and every day  
10 encouraging individuals to come inside to receive  
11 those services. Really pleased that the Mayor, the  
12 first Mayor ever in New York City to make the largest  
13 investment in street outreach. Again, that's going to  
14 get our safe havens, our stabilization beds, our  
15 drop-in centers. Those are critical tools to build  
16 that trust with the individuals to have them come in  
17 so we can provide the services they need so they can  
18 get on the path to be on the right footing. In  
19 regards to encampments, I'm going to have Assistant  
20 Commissioner Cox join in. I don't want to steal the  
21 thunder, but each and every time a person accepts our  
22 services, that's an opportunity for us to build trust  
23 with that individual. As I said, it's not a one size  
24 fits all. Everyone comes to us with individualized  
25 challenges. I also had a brother who was homeless, in

2 the streets, mental health concerns, and finally he's  
3 now in a supportive housing environment receiving  
4 those services, and my family and I are so happy. Is  
5 it completely done? No, but at least now he's inside.  
6 It took a long time to get him to go inside. As you  
7 know, Deputy Speaker, it's work, but it's worthwhile  
8 work. These individuals deserve our attention, they  
9 deserve the services that we have to offer them, and  
10 we're not going to walk away from them. Assistant  
11 Commissioner Cox, can you just chime in on the  
12 process of what we're doing with the encampments and  
13 really explain how the outreach staff are there first  
14 before the cleanup occurs and right before the  
15 cleanup actually happens.

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: Thank you,  
17 Commissioner, and hello, Deputy Speaker. Thank you  
18 for having us today. Just to reframe it, as the  
19 Commissioner said, the best solution to address the  
20 problem of unsheltered individuals experiencing long-  
21 term homelessness on the street is connection.  
22 Connecting them to services, treatment, care, and  
23 hopefully housing. Our job, everything we do, is to  
24 ensure that individuals have access to these services  
25 and that they can receive the care they need to put

2 them on the pathway to hopefully permanent housing.  
3 We're trying to engage individuals at every level of  
4 their pathway out of homelessness. As the  
5 Commissioner said, I'll go into the details of the  
6 encampment process, but, fundamentally, we have  
7 outreach teams involved in the process who are  
8 persistently, diligently trying to do transformative  
9 work. They're trying to be as thoughtful and  
10 strategic as possible in how they're approaching the  
11 work, and they're always tinkering with what's  
12 offered and the ways in which they're offered.  
13 Fundamentally, we view every individual on the street  
14 as a crisis. Every engagement, though, is an  
15 opportunity to connect them, to get them inside, and  
16 every night off the street is a success. Essentially,  
17 when the city encounters or learns of or receives a  
18 report about a condition on the street that needs to  
19 be addressed or that's illegal, unsanitary, unsafe,  
20 we're trying to address it quickly and carefully but  
21 with compassion and in a coordinated manner. Our role  
22 at DHS is to ensure that the unsheltered individuals  
23 living on the street have access to social services  
24 and housing, and they have access at every step of  
25 the process. They have access in every single

2 engagement even while these conditions are being  
3 addressed. Really, what that means is there's a  
4 couple key components.

5           Number one is providing advanced notice  
6 to the individuals alerting them that there's going  
7 to be a cleanup operation and then being on-hand  
8 before the operation, during the operation, and then,  
9 if need be, afterwards. If somebody does not accept  
10 services, we will continue to go back and reengage  
11 them. Obviously, we're always focused on preserving  
12 the relationships that we've built with clients  
13 through this engagement, but we want to be there,  
14 again, at every step of the process. We absolutely  
15 aim to give notice, and we almost always have given  
16 notice, at least 24 hours' notice.

17           DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Is that an  
18 acknowledgement that there have been times where  
19 notice hasn't been given?

20           ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: There may be  
21 particular emergency circumstances, but, outside of  
22 that, the general process is to give notice for us in  
23 the encampment cleaning process. DHS goes and gives  
24 notice to individuals at least 24 hours in advance.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: What would classify  
3 as an emergency situation where notice wouldn't be  
4 given?

5 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Commissioner, if I  
6 may jump in? Deputy Speaker, if we get notification  
7 that there's a location that's causing a harm to the  
8 individual or others such as hypodermic needles en  
9 masse that's there and needs to be cleaned, we would  
10 then go in because we don't want the general public  
11 or a child to go by and be in that environment so we  
12 would go in sooner than later and not wait for the at  
13 least 24 hours.

14 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. I'm sorry.  
15 Assistant Commissioner Cox, were you done?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: Yes.

17 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I think that we  
18 agree. Fundamentally we agree. No one wants to see  
19 people out on the street. It's the way that we  
20 approach them so connecting them to services is  
21 important, but how we connect them is equally  
22 important, and I think that, based on what we've  
23 seen, we're just not satisfied that we're doing it  
24 the right way. I would like to know, I know that  
25 under the de Blasio administration there were a

2 couple of safe haven and stabilized beds that were  
3 already in the pipeline that have started to open  
4 which is great, but, theoretically, do we have enough  
5 stabilized beds today or safe haven beds today that  
6 are in non-congregate settings to accommodate the  
7 need of the number of individuals that are sleeping  
8 in the subways or out on the street?

9           COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you, Deputy  
10 Commissioner, for that question. We have vacancies  
11 today that individuals can go into a safe haven or  
12 stabilization bed. When we're out there each and  
13 every day, each and every night, we're making that  
14 offer to individuals who are suitable for those types  
15 of settings. The Mayor's historical investment of 171  
16 million dollars gives the city an opportunity to  
17 create additional housing in regards to safe haven  
18 and stabilization beds. We are on track as the Subway  
19 Safety Plan, we said we are going to create 500  
20 additional safe haven and stabilization. We're on  
21 track to meeting that goal. 1,400 additional. By the  
22 end of this year, we will have 900 in the pipeline  
23 with the balance coming in 2023. We are going to  
24 continue to work towards that goal. We're going to  
25 meet that goal because that's what the Mayor has put

2 in place, and that's what he has charged us with and  
3 New Yorkers deserve it and we understand that this is  
4 what we are being driven towards and we're going to  
5 make sure we do it. It's a get-stuff-done  
6 administration, and we're going to make sure we get  
7 it done.

8 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Do you know what  
9 the number of beds is that are available today?

10 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: In total, I'm going  
11 to ask Administrator Carter to jump in, but I believe  
12 we have 2,000 across the 2 areas of stabilization and  
13 safe havens, but, Administrator Carter, you can join  
14 in, please.

15 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Commissioner, we  
16 have a total of just over 2,700, and, currently, we  
17 have about 2,600 clients who are in the beds, just  
18 over 1,600 in safe haven, 1,100 in stabilization. Our  
19 vacancy today is 131, and, as the Commissioner said,  
20 we continue to add units on. We have opened  
21 (INAUDIBLE) for 34 and we will have by the end of the  
22 year, meet the number we said we're going to meet and  
23 1,400 new investments of the 171.

24 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: You lost me a  
25 little bit. We have 131 vacancies today?

2 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Yes, ma'am.

3 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay, and, out of  
4 the 2,000+ that are currently occupied, are those new  
5 clients or are those preexisting clients that had  
6 already been...

7 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Some of those that  
8 we have brought in since the initiative started have  
9 come into those beds.

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. Do we know  
11 what the number of individuals that have accepted  
12 assistance is to date? We are what, 6 weeks into  
13 this?

14 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Since March 18th,  
15 40 people have come in since the encampment, March  
16 18th to present.

17 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: 40 people have come  
18 in? Okay.

19 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Yes, ma'am.

20 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: The Mayor mentioned  
21 at his press event when we were announcing the 171  
22 million dollar allocation for additional beds that a  
23 total of 700 individuals had been identified and had  
24 accepted assistance. Is that number not accurate?

25



2           COMMISSIONER JENKINS: That number is  
3 accurate, Deputy Speaker. That number pertains to the  
4 Subway Safety Plan that came into place so in the  
5 subway system at end of line and in our engagement on  
6 the subways, 700 individuals said yes, accepted our  
7 services, and came into our shelter system. We are  
8 really proud of that number because, as you know,  
9 when we first started initially it was a single  
10 digit, but we knew that on behalf of our dedicated  
11 staff and our providers, as we continue to be out  
12 there and build trust with individuals and really  
13 explain to them, we develop a palm card as well that  
14 demonstrates these are safe haven and stabilization  
15 beds, these are our traditional shelters. We're  
16 having that conversation day in and day out. 700  
17 individuals in our subway system said yes. We  
18 transported them to our shelter system. They accepted  
19 our services, and it really provided that opportunity  
20 to start building trust.

21           DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I'm a little  
22 confused because the math is not adding up for me. We  
23 have 700 people that have accepted services as part  
24 of the Subway Safety Plan, but we only have 131  
25 vacancies in stabilized and safe haven beds available

2 so were those people placed in congregate settings or  
3 were they placed, where did you put them?

4 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: The individuals  
5 were placed in our shelter system, which is our  
6 dormitory style, which you categorize as congregate,  
7 I call it dormitory, our safe havens, our  
8 stabilization beds, our drop-in centers.

9 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: What is the length  
10 of stay at a drop-in center?

11 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Administrator  
12 Carter.

13 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: I'll get back to  
14 you on that, Deputy Speaker.

15 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. It's my  
16 understanding that a drop-in center has no bed.  
17 You're basically sitting in a chair waiting to be  
18 placed, right?

19 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Yeah, drop-in  
20 centers are just a first low-barrier where people are  
21 not yet ready to come into a traditional bed, whether  
22 it's a safe bed, a stabilization bed, or a  
23 traditional shelter setting so they can come in. It's  
24 the first entry for people who are beginning to build  
25 trust, those who are not yet ready, we can get them

2 into a drop-in center where they can get a shower,  
3 get food, and begin case management so it's making  
4 that connection so they don't have to be on the  
5 street that particular night. We find that when they  
6 start building that trust, the next step can be  
7 moving to a safe haven or a stabilization bed or  
8 entering our system. It's just the beginning state of  
9 yeah, I can come, but I'm not yet ready, and we have  
10 that available to them.

11 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Right, and the 700,  
12 Deputy Speaker, that 700 number is our dormitory, our  
13 safe haven, or our stabilization beds.

14 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. Of the ones  
15 that went into congregate setting, the dormitory  
16 style, do we know how many of them stayed?

17 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We can get that  
18 information for you. We have it.

19 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Yes, because I  
20 think one of the issues that we keep hearing from the  
21 impacted communities is I don't feel safe there, I'm  
22 not going to go, which, quite frankly, I don't  
23 understand how in 2022, and maybe this is a  
24 discussion moving forward, why we're not looking at,  
25 listen, I am an advocate of building more housing as

2 opposed to building more shelters, but we're going to  
3 need, right, we're a city that's mandated to house  
4 individuals that are unhoused so we're going to need  
5 shelters at some point. I don't know if we're going  
6 to need as many, but I don't understand why we're not  
7 investing money into retrofitting the existing sites  
8 so that they are more reflective of the need. It's  
9 very difficult to live in a congregate setting.  
10 You're sharing space with people you don't know.  
11 You're constantly afraid that you're going to get  
12 attacked. You're constantly afraid that your property  
13 is going to be stolen. Many people reported they  
14 don't even sleep. They don't feel, mentally, like  
15 they're exhausted, and you would have to be to accept  
16 living on the street or on the subway as an  
17 alternative option. I think that that in and of  
18 itself is a strong message that we need to be mindful  
19 and we need to be listening to, and I think that  
20 that's kind of where I struggle with all of this  
21 because I feel like we're not working as smart as we  
22 can to really create a comprehensive plan that looks  
23 at all of the complexities of homelessness in a way  
24 that is fruitful. Yeah, we can go out and we can  
25 break an encampment and we've cleaned that street.

2 Hooray for us, and great for the community because I  
3 understand, I have a responsibility to the entire  
4 community so that means the impacted unsheltered  
5 individuals and the community at large that's  
6 complaining about that encampment, but, if I am  
7 moving those people and they're telling me, Council  
8 Member, I will not go into a congregate setting, and  
9 I am still moving them and putting them in a  
10 congregate setting then I know that the likelihood  
11 that they're going to leave through the backdoor and  
12 they're going to end up sleeping on another street is  
13 very high. We're seeing that now here. We're seeing  
14 that in my district. I have one of the largest public  
15 housing stocks in the city, and I have never ever  
16 seen the number of homeless individuals sleeping in  
17 the hallways of my public housing developments as I  
18 have today. People with mattresses, furniture.  
19 Ideally, we would have 1 or 2 that would go up to the  
20 roof and we have people that have substance use  
21 disorder issues. That happens, but, to the extent  
22 that we're seeing it today, I've never seen it so I  
23 wonder, as I would imagine that anybody would, are  
24 those individuals people that are coming that are  
25 being pushed out of encampments on the street that

2 are now moving into buildings, are these people that  
3 are leaving the shelter system that we're not  
4 necessarily tracking so when we ask for tracking data  
5 it's important because that's how we gauge if we're  
6 being successful or not. We want to be helpful. We  
7 want you to be successful. We want to make sure that  
8 every individual has some place to stay where they  
9 feel safe, where they are being connected to the  
10 services and the resources that they deserve, but we  
11 want to do it in a way that is actually efficient and  
12 effective. I just want to put all of that out there  
13 because I think that the perception is that Members  
14 of the Council are a little bit too lax, we coddle  
15 people. It's not about coddling people. It's about  
16 being realistic. It does not benefit anyone if we're  
17 moving them from one place and putting them in  
18 another, and that raises a question for me. When you  
19 have a program, it's actually an initiative, I don't  
20 know if it's a policy of DHS, that whenever an  
21 individual is sighted on the street in order to  
22 qualify for a safe haven or for a stabilized bed they  
23 need to be sighted a certain number of times. That  
24 policy, as far as I'm concerned, is still in use so,  
25 if we identify John Doe on the corner of 33rd and 3rd

2 and we've already seen him there 3 or 4 times but now  
3 we've disrupted his encampment and he didn't accept  
4 services and he went somewhere else, does the clock  
5 start all over again in order for him to qualify for  
6 these services if he's identified elsewhere?

7           COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Deputy Speaker, you  
8 threw a couple of questions in there. Trying to keep  
9 it all in my head so I make some response to your  
10 questions. I'm going to start with the last and then  
11 I'm going to have Administrator Carter join in. In  
12 regards to placement into a safe haven or  
13 stabilization bed, the first interaction, we're doing  
14 that assessment, the outreach team is doing the  
15 assessment, the outreach team is doing an evaluation,  
16 the clinician that is there is doing the same to see  
17 what's best fit for that individual. We would not  
18 want to place someone in a safe haven, in a single  
19 occupancy room by themselves if they present with  
20 serious mental health challenges. We want to make  
21 sure that person first is safe and healthy. There is  
22 no rule in this administration that you have to be  
23 seen a certain amount of times before you place. Each  
24 and every night, we do direct placements from the  
25 streets or the subway system into a safe haven or a

2 stabilization if that's what's best for that  
3 individual when we do the assessment. We're going to  
4 always look at what's best for that individual  
5 because, as I said in the testimony, a one size fits  
6 all is not for everyone. If a person needs medical  
7 attention, we want to make sure that we are providing  
8 medical attention. If a person needs to get to a  
9 hospital, we want to make sure that person goes to a  
10 hospital and not just place in a single room which is  
11 not good for them, for us as a city as a whole so to  
12 answer your question, you can actually go, if you're  
13 suited, from the streets, from the subway system into  
14 one of our safe havens, stabilization, or dormitory.  
15 If they're known to our dormitory in the past, we  
16 want to have that engagement to say you still have a  
17 bed there, would you like to go back, and,  
18 Administrator Carter will join in, we go out at least  
19 once, twice a week we're in the subway system. I  
20 invite the Council Members to join me as well. I'm  
21 out there, 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock in the  
22 morning really engaging our neighbors, having them  
23 understand, showing them that brochure, there's a  
24 better way, there's a better space for you to be than



2 to be on the streets or in our subway system.  
3 Administrator Carter.

4 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Having just  
5 described what I described to you about the  
6 experiences with my own brother, yeah, for  
7 individuals like you and I who are housed it's easy  
8 to say that, but that's not the experience that those  
9 individuals that are living in those types of  
10 settings are describing so I think that that's where  
11 I struggle with it because there's a difference,  
12 there's a huge difference, and I've never heard a  
13 single person say listen, we have issues, we need to  
14 fix A, B, and C before we can get to D. No one has  
15 ever said that, and I think that it throws people off  
16 because it gives the impression that everything is  
17 rosy and everything is perfect, and it's not. It is a  
18 hugely imperfect system. It is impossible to deal  
19 with all of the complexities that you have to deal  
20 with and be perfect. We understand that, but we want  
21 there to be an acknowledgement like, listen, people  
22 don't want congregate setting, they don't want it,  
23 they don't want it. They don't want it for a specific  
24 reason. What are those reasons? How are we addressing  
25 that? You have seniors living in congregate settings

2 that are not getting resources. You have people with  
3 serious disabilities that are really vulnerable  
4 because they have to the one bed that's next to the  
5 electrical socket because we're not equipped to deal  
6 with all of these issues in that type of setting  
7 anymore, and that's really alarming. I know that my  
8 Colleagues are going to have questions and we have a  
9 host of people that are here to ask questions as well  
10 and I guess to share their testimony on their  
11 experiences. Go ahead.

12 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Deputy Speaker, I'm  
13 just going to echo our Commissioner in a couple of  
14 things. I just want to really acknowledge that  
15 (INAUDIBLE) what he says that we are perfectly  
16 imperfect, and we're really working to do better in  
17 certain places, and, certainly, we understand that  
18 sometimes we need to look at the entire picture, but  
19 there are a couple of things I want to make that is  
20 clear. Chronicity about being seen multiple times,  
21 that's not true. It might have been in past  
22 administrations. That is not true. We are out  
23 engaging and getting individuals to safe havens and  
24 stabilization beds as needed and as necessary so that  
25 is happening.

2 In terms of safety, and I think that  
3 there's the idea that dormitory-style shelters aren't  
4 safe, the majority of our shelter system is and  
5 people are marching with their feet and voting with  
6 their feet and we have a small number of people who  
7 are unsheltered, and those are the folks who have had  
8 trauma and other situations that has happened with  
9 them and we really need to engage them and that's  
10 what Shane has talked about, the outreach, multiple  
11 times that we have to connect with them and do  
12 outreach, but every single day that they come in and  
13 go back out, for them to be in, for us that is a  
14 success, and we continue to engage and go back out  
15 (INAUDIBLE) with us in any one of our settings,  
16 dormitory or safe haven or stabilization bed, we have  
17 services, we have case management on site to really  
18 assess individual needs and to make those needs  
19 available for them.

20 In terms of looking at those who are in  
21 NYCHA, what we have found over time is that  
22 individuals who are in NYCHA buildings have  
23 connections to those, to some relatives, and we're  
24 working some NYCHA, we have some (INAUDIBLE) that  
25 we're working that we do, walking through NYCHA

2 buildings with NYPD to try and engage individuals  
3 there so we are looking at that.

4 I do think that it's important to really  
5 recognize that those who are unsheltered, part of  
6 what our work is is to connect them to benefits when  
7 they come into us so I do believe that we serve those  
8 who have fallen through safety nets and we are the  
9 safety nets of the safety net and so we really need  
10 to help them come in to a stable housing place, help  
11 them to get their documents, help them to really go  
12 through whatever, reset because they've been through  
13 trauma and get them ready to move to permanent  
14 housing as Commissioner Shane has talked about, and,  
15 when they're ready to come in at any time, be it 2  
16 p.m. on a Saturday or 2 a.m. on a Sunday, we're  
17 there, and so that's why we're there and that's the  
18 work we're doing every single day. I do recognize  
19 that we need to continue to do the work, but, also,  
20 we have to make sure that we're doing this with care  
21 and compassion and the Commissioner has beaten that  
22 into our heads. This is how we need to do that work.  
23 We will continue to do that. As the Commissioner  
24 says, we're out at night, and we're seeing that

2 placement from subway to stabilization or safe haven,  
3 and so we're doing that comprehensive work.

4 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Maybe we can go and  
5 hang out at one of the congregate settings and spend  
6 the night. I would welcome spending the night with  
7 you, Commissioner. We can go and hang out there and  
8 see what it looks like, what it feels like to..

9 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Deputy Speaker, you  
10 know I'm very collaborative, and I definitely want to  
11 be part of the solution, and I welcome you and the  
12 other Council Members, to welcome your ideas and  
13 suggestions on what we can do. I also want to say I  
14 appreciate the fact that you acknowledge that we are  
15 a right-to-shelter city, that we definitely will need  
16 to create additional shelters throughout the city. We  
17 are looking at purpose-built shelters. As you said,  
18 we don't want to continue that practice of  
19 retrofitting into a building but really looking at  
20 what's best for the community, what's best for our  
21 clients, what's best for the city as a whole so I'm  
22 glad you acknowledged that and that is our vision on  
23 how do we create purpose-built shelters throughout  
24 the city.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I'll ask a couple  
3 of really quick questions, and then I'm going to  
4 defer to my Colleagues. How does DHS define safe  
5 haven, because we saw in a recent announcement of a  
6 safe haven in the South Bronx, there were photos that  
7 were shown that looked like a smaller congregate  
8 setting as opposed to what we think is more in line  
9 with what see as a safe haven, which is a smaller,  
10 maybe 1 or 2 beds per room, so how does DHS define a  
11 safe haven?

12 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Safe haven is more  
13 of an intimate setting. It is smaller units. We have  
14 our single occupancy, we have double, some is  
15 quadruple, but we have on-site services. Medical  
16 services for those who actually need that service.  
17 When we do our assessment, we do our evaluation, we  
18 recognize that that particular individual would do  
19 better in a smaller setting so throughout our safe  
20 havens, low-barrier locations, it's for individuals  
21 who need that more hands-on. Stabilization, that's  
22 for more independent. If we can refer a person for  
23 mental health services, for medical services, because  
24 they're more independent then they'll be placed in  
25 that stabilization unit. That's why it's so important

2 that we do that assessment and not just do a one size  
3 fits all. It's having that conversation with the  
4 individual to see where they can most likely thrive  
5 more and trust us in that particular type of setting.

6 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: What do you think  
7 is the optimal number of people per room in a safe  
8 haven?

9 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: It depends on the  
10 individual, right? Like I said, we have singles, we  
11 have doubles, we have some quadruples. The one we  
12 went to in the Bronx, our newest one, I believe what  
13 I saw there, Administrator Carter, we had rooms that  
14 fit 4 individuals into the quads.

15 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: How do individuals  
16 who accept referrals to a shelter, safe haven,  
17 stabilized bed, or a drop-in center get to the site?

18 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We provide  
19 transportation. We provide transportation when we're  
20 out on the streets or in the subway system.  
21 Transportation is part of it. That's also part of the  
22 investment that the Mayor has, it's part of his 171  
23 million. It's also for additional transportation.

24

25

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. Can you share  
3 which agencies are conducting the homeless outreach  
4 on the subways?

5 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: It's the Department  
6 of Homeless Services, Human Resources Administration,  
7 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the  
8 State Department of Health, I think it's the State  
9 Mental Health.

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Recently, Governor  
11 Hochul announced an expansion of Kendra's Law. What  
12 part, if any, does DHS play in referrals for  
13 individuals that may qualify for those services?

14 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Those are our  
15 clinicians. It's primarily with the Department of  
16 Mental Health and Hygiene, but we also have our  
17 clinical staff within DHS. They're trained on 958. If  
18 an individual is identified as a 958, then that  
19 referral would be made to a hospital so they can be  
20 evaluated.

21 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. My concern  
22 with Kendra's Law is that if an individual is being  
23 referred, what level of interaction are they having  
24 with a mental health professional out on the street?



2 Is it like 1 contact, 2 contacts, what does that look  
3 like?

4 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: It can be 1  
5 contact. If an individual is experiencing mental  
6 health challenges, real mental health challenges that  
7 raise to the level of a 958, then that person will be  
8 evaluated and transported to a hospital for an  
9 evaluation. We would not want to leave that  
10 individual on the train or on the subway to be harm  
11 to themselves or others. That's something I think  
12 everyone would be in agreement with, not to leave  
13 that individual to their own vices if we recognize  
14 that they qualify as a 958.

15 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: Commissioner, if I  
16 may. The clinicians that are doing it are trained  
17 through the Department of Health and Mental Health so  
18 they have additional training to perform those  
19 evaluations so that's something that if they meet the  
20 standards those are also trained to do that.

21 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. What is the  
22 extent of the training? Do you know?

23 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: It's a DOHMH  
24 training that happens. I don't know specifically. I'm  
25 a licensed clinician, but I'm not trained to do that.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Yeah. Okay. What is  
3 a 958? Could you explain what a 958 is?

4 ADMINISTRATOR CARTER: It's out of my  
5 realm so I think we need to get back to you on what  
6 exactly that is. I don't want to speak out of turn  
7 exactly. It's a mental health standard law for  
8 removing those who are unsafe to themselves and  
9 others.

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. In regards to  
11 supportive housing, because I think we all agree that  
12 in order to move away from a sheltered setting period  
13 we need to create more affordable housing, supportive  
14 housing options being key. We really didn't see a  
15 real commitment in terms of funding for the building  
16 of new supportive housing units in this year's  
17 budget, but curious to know what progress has been  
18 made fulfilling the estimated 2,500 vacant supportive  
19 housing units that have come out in the press as  
20 having been available. Basically, want to know what  
21 the status of those beds is and why we're not filling  
22 them? This is something...

23 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you, Deputy  
24 Speaker, for that question. We are laser focused on  
25 filling our supportive housing vacancies. According

2 to the, as you said, the press stated it was 2,500.  
3 We are down a little over 1,800 vacancies. We are  
4 working really closely with sister agencies and that  
5 falls under the HPD, Department of Health and Mental  
6 Hygiene, the Human Resources Administration, our  
7 providers. We're engaged with them on a daily basis.  
8 If I say daily, I know I've watched meetings occur  
9 because we're really looking at opportunities where  
10 we can streamline our processes, how are we referring  
11 individuals to those units who are eligible for  
12 supportive housing. We're doing that on a day in and  
13 day out basis to ensure that eligible populations are  
14 moving into these vacant units. We recognize there is  
15 vacancies. The Mayor has directed us to be laser  
16 focused on it. We are. We're working across our  
17 agencies, again, to look at the streamlining  
18 processes. We went from the 2,500. We're not at  
19 1,800, and we're going to continue to drive down  
20 who's eligible for those particular criteria. There's  
21 different criteria you have to be eligible for for  
22 particular units, and I don't want to go into it,  
23 it's weedy, but the (INAUDIBLE) the regular  
24 supportive housing, who's eligible for state units. I  
25 directed the team look at the processes, look at how

2 we can break down those barriers, look at how we can  
3 streamline, but, more importantly, look at who's  
4 identified and qualified for those units, and we're  
5 working with our wonderful providers. The providers  
6 are really, really great.

7 I also want to say that 90 percent of  
8 supportive housing in New York City are filled. We  
9 have a 10 percent vacancy rate. Prior to COVID, it  
10 was a 5 percent vacancy rate. That 10 percent,  
11 because folks were not moving, because COVID brought  
12 us a lot of different challenges. We're getting back  
13 to that 5 percent, and, honestly, I would like to see  
14 it even lower because I want any unit that's  
15 available and folks are qualified for I want them to  
16 move into those units, but, again, that's in  
17 partnership with our providers, that's in partnership  
18 with our sister agencies, and we're doing that today.  
19 We have a really good plan in place. I'm actually  
20 seeing the numbers on a daily basis of folks moving  
21 into units, and I'm monitoring it closely myself.

22 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: You're down from  
23 2,500 to 1,800 since March or since January?

24 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Since the article  
25 was posted, since March.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay, since March.  
3 Okay, that's pretty significant. All right, so would  
4 you say that it's more bureaucratic tape that's  
5 preventing people from accessing these units, is the  
6 eligible criteria, or is it a combination of things?

7 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: It's a combination.  
8 We're doing an overall assessment on where there are  
9 opportunities for us to improve across and also  
10 speaking with the state to say maybe some rules and  
11 regulations that's in place need to be adjusted, but  
12 we're going to have those conversations as we do our  
13 aggressive assessment, but, right now, I have the  
14 team laser focused on identifying individuals who are  
15 eligible and working with the provider community to  
16 say we need to fill those units with our eligible  
17 population.

18 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Absolutely. We have  
19 the beds available. There's no reason why, when we  
20 have housing available, there's no reason why we  
21 shouldn't be referring folks. Okay. I'm going to stop  
22 asking questions because I have a few more. I'll come  
23 back, but I want to allow my Colleagues to ask  
24 questions as well.

2 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: I'm now going  
3 to turn to Council Members (INAUDIBLE) so we will  
4 start with Council Member Brewer.

5 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: (INAUDIBLE) that  
7 will codify these federal rights and ensure that  
8 states cannot restrict...

9 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Council Member  
10 Brewer, do you have questions?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: If the judicial  
12 branch won't stand up for reproductive healthcare for  
13 women...

14 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: It sounds like  
15 Council Member Brewer may not be able to ask her  
16 questions at this point so I will turn it now over to  
17 Council Member Restler.

18 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Sorry. We've got  
20 a press conference with the Speaker on Roe v. Wade  
21 and the tragic leaked opinion.

22 Firstly, I just want to thank  
23 Commissioner Jenkins, Administrator Carter, Shane,  
24 all of our outreach providers, Breaking Ground, BRC,  
25 (INAUDIBLE) Hospitality for your great work and your

2 dedication, and I know your hearts are in the right  
3 place, but there are very serious issues here that  
4 need much greater attention and investment. I also  
5 really want to thank our Chair, Council Member Ayala.  
6 Diana, your remarks a week or so ago with the Mayor's  
7 announcement on the new investment in street outreach  
8 and stabilization and safe haven beds and drop-in  
9 centers was profoundly moving. Your leadership is  
10 extraordinary. You are the absolutely right person to  
11 be leading this Committee, and I really want to thank  
12 you for your line of questioning, particularly as it  
13 relates to the inadequacy of our single adult  
14 shelters, and I think that Joslyn, to say that a  
15 small number of people are unsheltered, I get that  
16 it's a small number of people as a percentage of the  
17 total homeless population in New York, but we have  
18 thousands of people who are on the streets, and I  
19 think that our counts underestimate the real numbers  
20 so it's a significant crisis that we have on our  
21 hands of street homelessness, and I think it's  
22 important to acknowledge that the number one driver  
23 of street homelessness is the inadequacy of our  
24 single adult shelters, and too many of our single  
25 adult shelters, like Bed Atlantic and Wards Island

2 are causing more harm than offering help to people  
3 who are in them so we have significant work to do. As  
4 the representative for the area where these sweeps  
5 started by Meeker Avenue, to be going out to people  
6 who have been on the street and offering 30th Street  
7 as a housing solution is no solution at all. These  
8 folks have been through the shelter system. They do  
9 not feel safe in the shelter system. Safe havens are  
10 what's necessary, and I really want to applaud the  
11 Mayor for making this major 171 million dollar  
12 investment in safe havens and stabilization beds,  
13 drop-in centers, and outreach workers.

14 I do have some questions, and I'm just  
15 going to ask for brevity, even yes/no answers if it's  
16 possible just because I know I'm on the clock so if  
17 you don't mind. The outreach staff, my understanding  
18 is that we were currently at about 600 funded lines,  
19 but there are significant vacancies. Could you  
20 comment on how many of the 600-odd positions that  
21 were funded prior to this announcement are actually  
22 filled?

23 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Council Member,  
24 that's not a yes/no question.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: That's not a  
3 yes/no, but that's a number, it's a number. It's a  
4 yes/no or numbers.

5 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We have a little  
6 over 700 that's allocated. We are aggressively  
7 working with our provider to fill those vacancies,  
8 and we actually just authorized an increase in the  
9 salary for the outreach workers to...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So the 12 million  
11 dollars will go toward increased salaries, not  
12 additional heads?

13 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: No, the 12 million  
14 dollars will go towards additional heads. What I was  
15 saying is that we recently increased the salaries for  
16 the existing staff and the new staff that's coming on  
17 board. The 12 million...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: The 12 million is  
19 exclusively for new heads?

20 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: The 12 million is  
21 part of the new heads and transportation.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: New heads and  
23 transportation. What was the salary increase that you  
24 all approved? I hadn't seen that?

2 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: I'll get back to  
3 you. I don't want to give an incorrect number in my  
4 testimony.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: How many of those  
6 700 positions are currently filled?

7 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We'll get back to  
8 you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, because  
10 when I hear from the providers, I hear that there are  
11 significant vacancies and that we have a real  
12 challenge that because the salaries have been so low  
13 they haven't been able to fill the positions. These  
14 are really hard jobs, and all of you who do this work  
15 have all of my empathy and respect because it's  
16 really, really tough, and these are folks who are  
17 struggling and so I appreciate all of the effort, but  
18 I am concerned about my understanding is on the  
19 vacancies. I'm happy to hear there's a salary  
20 increase that's happening with a lot more specifics.

21 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Council Member  
22 Restler, I just also want to give kudos to Mayor  
23 Adams and OMB who helped us when we went to them and  
24 said this is what we need to get done in order to  
25 increase our retention rate, it was approved.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, good. Thank  
3 you. That's great to hear. I know it's not always  
4 easy to get OMB to cooperate, but David Greenberg's a  
5 good guy. Appreciate him...

6 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: David Greenberg is  
7 a fantastic guy.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We can all agree  
9 about that.

10 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Next up, I was  
12 wondering do you have locations yet for the 3 new  
13 drop-in centers?

14 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We are evaluating  
15 that process now and...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Or neighborhoods  
17 that you're planning to prioritize?

18 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We're looking into  
19 and assessing where those drop-in centers...

20 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

21 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: And appreciate the  
22 Council Members participation in that process as  
23 well.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. If we can  
25 be helpful in the 33rd in any way, let me know. Chair

2 Ayala, would it be okay if I continued on for 1 more  
3 minute if there's no one else waiting?

4 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Yes, that's fine  
5 with me.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so  
7 much. I really appreciate it. I'll try to be brief. I  
8 was wondering if you could provide a breakdown  
9 between stabilization beds and safe havens for the  
10 140 million. I think it was 1,400 new beds was the  
11 number that was cited to go on top of the 2,700 or so  
12 funded now. Do you have a breakdown of what you're  
13 anticipating for safe havens versus stabilization  
14 beds?

15 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We're anticipating  
16 that the vast majority will be safe havens, but the  
17 balance will be stabilization beds.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. Great. I'm  
19 happy to hear that. Thank you. I wanted to ask you 2  
20 more questions. One is downtown Brooklyn, as you know  
21 better than me, has the highest concentration of  
22 street homeless individuals in the borough. Will this  
23 additional funding generate more dedicated outreach  
24 or any kind of hotspot-oriented approach to address  
25 the street homeless conditions in our community and

2 try and help connect those folks to housing and  
3 support?

4                   COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Council Member,  
5 thank you for that question. We're doing an  
6 assessment across the city, and, of course, we're  
7 doing that assessment in regards to where are the  
8 hotspots, where the additional outreach staff are  
9 needed, and we're going to have that open  
10 conversation as well with the Council to say this is  
11 where we're placing our additional staff so open to  
12 having that additional conversation with you, sir.

13                   COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: If you're looking  
14 for a suggestion, I think you could pick your highest  
15 need in each borough and say you're going to dedicate  
16 some additional staff specifically to those areas to  
17 try to make a real difference, and I think downtown  
18 Brooklyn certainly would meet that criteria in  
19 Brooklyn, and we could really use the help. The last  
20 question, and I really, really hope, Commissioner,  
21 that you'll consider it because, as you know well,  
22 we've got 2 new shelters opening in downtown Brooklyn  
23 for single adults in the next 3 months, all of the  
24 existing street homeless conditions are going to be  
25 blamed on those 2 shelters. We're doing everything we

2 can to try and make those 2 shelters successful  
3 neighbors in our community. If we could address the  
4 existing street homeless conditions, it would help a  
5 great deal, and I think additional outreach staff and  
6 the additional safe haven capacity you're bringing on  
7 would really make a difference.

8           Lastly, the Mayor and you all have  
9 mentioned this 700 figure of folks that you've  
10 brought off of the subways and I imagine through  
11 other means as well. Could you give us the number,  
12 though, of those 700 that are currently still in the  
13 shelter system?

14           COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We can get back to  
15 you, for sure. Council Member, I also want to say I  
16 appreciate your ongoing collaboration. We've been in  
17 discussion in regards to the 2 shelters opening up in  
18 downtown Brooklyn. You've been very supportive, and I  
19 want you to know that this administration appreciates  
20 it and me, personally as the Commissioner for  
21 Department of Social Services, appreciate you and all  
22 that you're doing to ensure that the shelters are  
23 successful, and we're going to continue to be good,  
24 transparent partners.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate  
3 that, and I'm going to continue to be a welcoming  
4 Council Member and try to appeal to the best nature  
5 of my community, but I have to say we really do need  
6 help in addressing the street homeless conditions,  
7 and I think additional outreach workers and dedicated  
8 safe haven capacity to support the individuals in  
9 downtown Brooklyn that are in need would make a great  
10 difference, and I'm not going to ever play a NIMBY  
11 card on you all. It's our job as leaders to support  
12 the most vulnerable and to welcome them and to make  
13 sure that they're getting all the help and support  
14 that they need, but we also need DSS to step up and  
15 help us address the street homeless conditions in our  
16 community so any partnership there, any additional  
17 investments and collaboration would be greatly,  
18 greatly appreciated.

19 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you,  
21 Commissioner. Thank you, Chair Ayala.

22 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
23 Council Member Restler. Turning it back over to Chair  
24 Ayala.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you. I'm not  
3 sure that you're going to have these numbers, but I'm  
4 curious and I have to ask. Do we know what the number  
5 of homeless people who have been arrested or issued  
6 summons since the start of the Subway Safety Plan is?

7 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: No, I don't, Deputy  
8 Speaker. That would be more appropriate for NYPD.

9 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I kind of figured  
10 that, but I had to ask. I'll ask 2 more questions  
11 regarding this. Regarding the sweeps, what is the  
12 process for safeguarding a person's individual  
13 property and can they get their belongings back?

14 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Absolutely.

15 (INAUDIBLE) Assistant Commissioner Cox because he's  
16 on the ground and really sees it each and every day  
17 along with his team, but, as we're out there, we go  
18 prior to a cleanup, the staff are engaging the  
19 individuals, letting them know how we can help them  
20 and that includes if they need storage, securing a  
21 voucher for storing their personal belongings that's  
22 valuable to them. We have that conversation with  
23 individuals and making sure that these are your  
24 valuables and the city is here to help you secure



2 those valuables. Assistant Commissioner Cox can give  
3 a little more detail.

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: That's right.

5 As the Commissioner was saying, it frames a lot of  
6 our engagement as well in the leadup to a cleaning,  
7 during the cleaning, and again after is the items. As  
8 the Commissioner said, we discuss ways that they can  
9 access be it through HRA and then during the  
10 cleanings some items have indeed been vouchered  
11 through the process, but it is a continuous  
12 conversation we have with clients, even separate and  
13 apart from the cleanings. Anything that will get  
14 inside, if the items are a barrier to getting  
15 somebody inside, then that is something we  
16 concentrate on and work with clients around.

17 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: What about language  
18 accessibility? Are you guys translating documents  
19 into other languages? Do you have staff available  
20 that's bilingual?

21 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER COX: The cleaning  
22 notices, we have them in all 30 languages, yes, and,  
23 absolutely, all the outreach staff have access to a  
24 language line as well as other language resources. We

2 want to absolutely make every effort to engage  
3 everybody in the language that they prefer.

4 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. I'm sure that  
5 this question will come up again at the executive  
6 budget hearing, but has the administration calculated  
7 the average cost of each street sweep given the large  
8 presence of police and sanitation workers and how  
9 many city employees are on site at each sweep?

10 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Deputy Speaker,  
11 that information can definitely be discussed at the  
12 executive budget hearing. We don't have that today.

13 I recognize that we've been joined by  
14 Council Member Riley.

15 I have 3 more questions. What is the  
16 average amount of time that it is currently taking  
17 DHS to process a CityFHEPS apartment from the moment  
18 that the client reports that they have secured an  
19 apartment to check pickup?

20 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: As with any normal  
21 New Yorkers, I set the story to staff the other day.  
22 I was looking for an apartment for my daughter, and,  
23 just to go through the application, the interview,  
24 getting documents together, pay stubs, it took around  
25 3 or 4 weeks so it's a process that we have to go

2 through. Some of our clients, not all because I don't  
3 want to put a blanket statement, some of our clients  
4 require additional assistance with obtaining  
5 documents, and that's where we step in to ensure that  
6 we provide that individual with documentation, if  
7 they need pay stubs, if they need a budget letter,  
8 helping them with the application process, getting  
9 them ready for the interview, that takes time so what  
10 we're evaluating and what our results are showing  
11 that it takes anywhere between I think 11 and 16 days  
12 from start to finish, once a place is identified,  
13 getting the documents ready, that's happening. When  
14 the application process is completed, we are turning  
15 those benefits, the checks, around within 3 days  
16 because we want to make sure that that person moves  
17 into a unit as quickly as possible.

18 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: That's pretty good.  
19 Do we know how many move-outs occurred each month  
20 from September 2021 to April 2022?

21 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: I have that  
22 information. I don't want to hold you up, but I can  
23 definitely get back to you for sure.

24

25

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Can you ensure that  
3 it's segregated by household size and by borough?  
4 That'll be helpful.

5 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We will do our  
6 best, Deputy Speaker.

7 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you. Okay,  
8 final question. Can you tell us how many staff  
9 members does DSS have to process CityFHEPS  
10 preclearance and applications?

11 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: I believe we have,  
12 I think it's 24 individuals that are dedicated. We  
13 continue to fill our vacancies as well because across  
14 the nation, there are vacancies, and we have the same  
15 challenges with retention rates, but the vacancies  
16 that we have we are aggressively trying to fill to  
17 ensure that we are providing top-notch service to New  
18 York City, but I believe the answer to your question  
19 is like 24 individuals dedicated to the  
20 preclearances.

21 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Actually, I have  
22 one more question. Regarding the drop-in centers, you  
23 mentioned that you're opening 3 new drop-in centers?

24 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Yes.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Do we know when  
3 those will be online and where?

4 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We're doing an  
5 assessment as to where they will be open, and, as I  
6 said with Council Member Restler, we are doing that  
7 assessment and we will make sure that we are going to  
8 engage you, Deputy Speaker, when we finalize and say  
9 this is where they're going in addition to wherever  
10 we're going to site those with their particular  
11 Council Member.

12 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Okay. Do we know  
13 when they go online?

14 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: We don't because it  
15 was just announced so we're excited about it and we  
16 want to make sure we give a thoughtful process as to  
17 where they should be.

18 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Perfect. Thank you.  
19 Thank you so much for your testimony today and for  
20 answering all our questions, and, again, I look  
21 forward to having a supportive, working relationship  
22 with the agency because our intentions are very  
23 similar. Thank you. Hopefully, you can leave  
24 somebody...

25 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Thank you.

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Behind to listen to  
3 the panel.

4 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: Absolutely. Thank  
5 you, Deputy Speaker. I appreciate you and your  
6 leadership.

7 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Appreciate you.

8 COMMISSIONER JENKINS: All right.

9 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you to  
10 all the members of the administration for your  
11 testimony today.

12 We are now going to move on to additional  
13 public testimony. As a reminder, all public testimony  
14 will be limited to 2 minutes. After I call your name,  
15 please wait a brief moment for the Sergeant-at-Arms  
16 to announce that you may begin before starting your  
17 testimony.

18 The next panel in the order of speaking  
19 will be Karim Walker, Ashley Belcher, and Shams de  
20 Baron. We are now going to begin the next panel  
21 starting with Karim Walker. Over to Karim. Just a  
22 note that Karim and Ashley are together and will be  
23 testifying one after the other.

24 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

2 ASHLEY BELCHER: I'm going to go first.

3 Good afternoon, Members of the City Council. My name  
4 is Ashley Belcher. I'm an outreach and organization  
5 specialist at Human.NYC, a homeless advocacy group.  
6 In my 10 years of being street homeless, my  
7 experience with outreach teams individually has been  
8 very uneventful. The main times that an outreach  
9 worker would stop to talk to me would be while I was  
10 asleep or trying to get food. I would be asked if I  
11 needed to go to a shelter right then and there. Not  
12 one time did they have water or any type of food.  
13 Also, any time they would talk to me, there was no  
14 real reliable way to reach the same person who I just  
15 spoke to, no cell number, no email, and no real  
16 information about permanent housing. In my years of  
17 being street homeless, I would also have to endure  
18 NYPD approaching me with BRC Outreach. I feel no  
19 homeless person should have to be woken up outside by  
20 police, even if outreach is beside them. It's  
21 uncomfortable, and it makes the situation worse for  
22 the overall outreach team. It's a more aggressive  
23 approach which leads to a negative outcome overall.

24 If I was able to conduct an outreach  
25 team, not only would I bring food and/or water when I

2 spoke to someone, I would make it my first priority  
3 to give people contact information for ways to ask  
4 questions and know where to get food and information  
5 on CityFHEPS vouchers and clothing drives. Anything  
6 to help them get back (INAUDIBLE) to society and on  
7 their feet. That approach is how you gain trust.  
8 Thank you for your time.

9 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
10 much for your testimony, Ashley. I'm now going to  
11 turn to Karim Walker. Over to Karim.

12 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time. Mr. Walker,  
13 you may begin.

14 KARIM WALKER: Thank you. The crackdowns  
15 and the aggressive sweeps of the city's homeless  
16 population, which we all know are a continuation of  
17 the previous administration's policy with addressing  
18 homelessness is a wrong-headed attempt by the city to  
19 address homelessness. That goes without saying. It  
20 also should go without saying that homelessness is a  
21 problem that has a very simple solution, housing. The  
22 city has the available housing necessary to house  
23 every homeless person in the city but lacks, for  
24 whatever reason, the political will to do so. Mayor  
25 Adams has shown no real tangible interest in



2 addressing homelessness but rather governing in  
3 reaction to what will score him the most political  
4 brownie points politically speaking, and these sweeps  
5 have made that very evident. These clearances where  
6 you have cops, sanitation workers, outreach workers  
7 basically descending upon homeless encampments and  
8 destroying everything in sight, which seem to target  
9 certain parts of the city such as Anarchy Road on the  
10 Lower East Side East Village with the goal of getting  
11 people to (INAUDIBLE) into the shelter system, the  
12 only thing that they hope to accomplish is just to  
13 embarrass homeless people and break their spirits. We  
14 can do better than that, than just harassment,  
15 intimidation, and the constant fear of arrest when it  
16 comes to helping our homeless neighbors. They deserve  
17 a home, and they deserve a city committed to making  
18 sure that happens. This brings me to my main point,  
19 how we transition people from the streets to a home.  
20 The use of safe havens, which some of you may know  
21 are less restrictive versus the shelters, has proven  
22 effective, but, and this is a big but, they are not  
23 designed as congregate shelters.

24 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

2           KARIM WALKER: Okay. People will be more  
3 likely to go into a safe haven if they feel like they  
4 know there's going to be at most 1 or 2 people per  
5 room instead of 2 dozen people. We're demanding that  
6 the Mayor and the City Council put that language into  
7 any and all future contracts with homeless shelter  
8 providers to make sure that these safe havens are  
9 working the way they're supposed to work to make sure  
10 that there are fewer restrictions and that they can  
11 put people on the path to getting a home of their  
12 own.

13           DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you, Karim.  
14 That's a really good idea.

15           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
16 Karim, for your testimony. Now I'm going to turn to  
17 Shams de Baron.

18           SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

19           SHAMS DE BARON: I'm going to read my  
20 statement. First of all, greetings everyone. I'm  
21 going to try to read it fast. I want to say I  
22 appreciate being here and hope that what I say can be  
23 beneficial to all of you and help you make informed  
24 decisions based on this testimony from a directly  
25 impacted person such as myself. As someone who grew

2 up in the foster care system from the age of 2,  
3 started experiencing homelessness at the age of 10,  
4 and was permanently discharged into the street at the  
5 age of 12 without a safety net, I know very well the  
6 experience of being homeless, of being vulnerable, of  
7 sleeping in the streets, on the subways, in buildings  
8 and other places where the threat of danger was a  
9 constant. As a child, can you imagine the trauma of  
10 being targeted by pedophiles and predators and what I  
11 had to do to ensure my safety and protection from  
12 such. Suffice it to say that my life was no crystal  
13 stem. My story would make a brass monkey cry. Yet  
14 with all that I've been through as a child and young  
15 adult, it is my experience as a single father raising  
16 my son in a family shelter system that is the most  
17 traumatic. This experience has been so traumatic that  
18 I very rarely share that experience, and I have yet  
19 to heal, my son has yet to heal from the other  
20 failure of this city to do the right thing by us. I'm  
21 here doing this work not because I represent some  
22 well-funded nonprofit or I'm someone with a political  
23 agenda or because I want to be in the press as the  
24 homeless hero, but, because as a trauma-informed  
25 activist, I never want for another human being to

2 experience what I have and so many others who are  
3 experiencing or have experienced homelessness and  
4 housing insecurity. I've been working nonstop to  
5 change things from the top down to ensure that this  
6 city is working towards eradicating homelessness. Let  
7 me be clear, while I have several goals, I can say  
8 that at the top of my list is getting this city to  
9 begin...

10 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

11 SHAMS DE BARON: Moving away from the  
12 congregate shelter models to a reimagined shelter to  
13 be physically a holistic environment with services on  
14 site along with therapeutic programming. The previous  
15 way of outsourcing the services off site is something  
16 that is not beneficial to residents in shelters.  
17 Every congregate shelter I've been in I consider to  
18 be a drug den and a haven for criminal activity. It  
19 is a breeding ground for mental illness and substance  
20 abuse. We have to move away from this model because  
21 it is unappealing to anyone experiencing homelessness  
22 and it is inhumane and unhealthy. Low-barrier and  
23 safe haven and stabilization beds are a better  
24 option, and we have to use and provide services on  
25 site there as well. I would like for the city to

2 acknowledge that the homelessness issue in this city  
3 is actually a crisis and we as a city should be  
4 mobilizing all resources to combat this and  
5 ultimately reduce homelessness and end homelessness  
6 in New York City. With all of the people now in court  
7 facing eviction, I can guarantee you that if you do  
8 not move on this with the urgency that is needed you  
9 will face something that you have never seen in terms  
10 of homelessness. The people who will enter your  
11 shelters are people who have never experienced  
12 homelessness, men, women, and children. The shelter  
13 system is already overwhelmed with people, the  
14 streets, the projects, hallways, the tenement  
15 hallways, the subways, they're all overwhelmed.

16           As I close, I want to say that I'm  
17 optimistic that the Mayor and his agencies are doing  
18 as much as they can to address issues and fix this  
19 broken system, but where I get a little concerned is  
20 why I see the focus so much on getting people into  
21 shelters and continuing the building of, what I call,  
22 a shelter industrial complex. We need to move away  
23 from that. I don't have to tell you that housing is  
24 the answer. I want to hear more and see more of how  
25 we are going to access permanent and supportive

2 housing, more of how we would eliminate the barriers  
3 preventing people from transitioning from being  
4 homeless to being placed into housing. I have been  
5 and will continue to work with the Mayor and all of  
6 you in whatever way I can to address the issues and a  
7 lot of work I know is being done and more must be  
8 done. I commend the administration for moving quickly  
9 within a short amount of time to address these issues  
10 and for listening to not just the people that they  
11 have around them but people like myself and allowing  
12 us to have a seat at the table, a voice in the  
13 discussion, and a hand in the decision-making, and I  
14 would want for the City Council, lastly, and the  
15 Mayor and the state government to work together to  
16 address this issue but also to continue to allow us  
17 to have a seat at these tables because our voices  
18 matter. Thank you. Thank you for the extra time.

19 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
20 Shams, for your testimony. Thank you to this entire  
21 panel for your testimony today.

22 I'm now going to turn to our next panel.  
23 Our next panel will be in the following order  
24 Jacquelyn Simone, Joshua Goldfein, Catherine Trapani,  
25 and Tierra Labrada. Again, our next panel will be in

2 the following order, Jacquelyn Simone, Joshua  
3 Goldfein, Catherine Trapani, and Tierra Labrada. Over  
4 now to Jacquelyn Simone.

5 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

6 JACQUELYN SIMONE: Thank you to Chair  
7 Ayala and the Council for this important hearing and  
8 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jacquelyn  
9 Simone, and I am the Policy Director at the Coalition  
10 for the Homeless. We are submitting more extensive  
11 written testimony jointly with the Legal Aid Society,  
12 but I wanted to highlight some key recommendations.

13 The solution to homelessness is housing.  
14 The city should invest in affordable permanent  
15 housing where homeless neighbors can reside in peace  
16 away from the elements and other dangers on the  
17 street. We implore the city to immediately offer real  
18 permanent housing and safe private shelter options to  
19 people and to cease these cruel, pointless, and  
20 ineffective sweeps. Mayor Adams must cease encampment  
21 clearing operations and street sweeps and focus  
22 instead on connecting people to resources they want  
23 including low-barrier shelters and permanent housing,  
24 prohibit NYPD from responding to 311 calls requesting  
25 assistance for homeless individuals, and remove NYPD

2 from all homeless outreach functions, halt the  
3 deployment of additional police in response to  
4 homeless people located in transit facilities and  
5 trains, implement the CCIT NYC campaign's proposal  
6 for non-police responses to mental health crises,  
7 adopt a client-centered, harm reduction approach to  
8 outreach for unsheltered homeless individuals as Miss  
9 Belcher said including trained peers on outreach  
10 teams and equipping each team with essential items  
11 such as socks, hand sanitizer, menstrual products,  
12 backpacks, clothing, and coats, ensure notices are  
13 translated into multiple languages in compliance with  
14 Local Law 30 and provide required interpretation  
15 during outreach and other interactions with  
16 unsheltered New Yorkers, contrary to the testimony  
17 today, we have not seen these translations happen in  
18 actual sweeps, open at least 3,000 new safe haven and  
19 stabilization beds in single occupancy rooms and  
20 offer them to all unsheltered homeless individuals  
21 with a focus on expanding the number of these  
22 facilities for women and transgender or gender-  
23 nonconforming individuals, and increase drop-in  
24 center capacity citywide, allow individuals with



2 disabilities or chronic severe medical issues to  
3 enter a safe haven...

4 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

5 JACQUELYN SIMONE: Without first proving  
6 they have been on the streets for a certain length of  
7 time. May I have a few more seconds to finish?

8 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Continue.

9 JACQUELYN SIMONE: Okay. Open a sufficient  
10 network of public restrooms and 24-hour warming and  
11 cooling centers throughout the city with proper air  
12 filtration and ventilation, appropriate safety  
13 protocols and adequate personal protective equipment,  
14 administratively clear all summons for so-called  
15 quality of life offenses issued to people as a result  
16 of their homeless status, expand the number of  
17 overdose prevention centers and ensure that life-  
18 saving harm reduction services are readily available  
19 to all New Yorkers, rather than targeting places with  
20 hypodermic needles for sweeps we should be engaging  
21 with people and connecting them to harm reduction  
22 services, expand access to low-barrier physical and  
23 mental health care including virtual care and street  
24 medicine, and avoid characterizations of homeless

2 people that stereotype them as mentally ill and  
3 violent.

4 Thank you so much for the Council's  
5 commitment to these issues and for the extra time.

6 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you for  
7 your testimony. I'm now going to turn to Joshua  
8 Goldfein for testimony.

9 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

10 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Thank you. I'm Joshua  
11 Goldfein. I'm a Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid  
12 Society in the Homeless Rights Project. We are  
13 counsel to Coalition for the Homeless, and we are  
14 submitting to this hearing joint written testimony  
15 with Coalition for the Homeless, and so we endorse  
16 everything that Jackie just said. In summarizing that  
17 testimony, we also want to confirm that we support  
18 all 3 pieces of legislation that are before the  
19 Committee, and we thank the Deputy Speaker and the  
20 Members of the Committee and staff for preparing this  
21 hearing today to address these important reforms that  
22 are necessary. I think a theme that we have heard  
23 throughout the hearing today has been that the  
24 solution is clear, it's obvious, it's well-known,  
25 it's very simple, it's to provide people with

2 permanent affordable housing and then we won't have  
3 to even discuss many of the issues that are currently  
4 in dispute here. If people are offered something that  
5 they will accept, then that's the solution to getting  
6 people off the streets. The converse of that, which  
7 we've also seen, based on all available evidence that  
8 we're all familiar with now, is that the sweeps don't  
9 work, right, the current practices have been carried  
10 out by the prior administration and this one  
11 thousands and thousands of time and the result has  
12 been that people move or return to the places where  
13 they were. If we've had thousands and thousands of  
14 sweeps and we still have thousands of people on the  
15 street, it's very clear that what we're currently  
16 doing is not working and is a huge waste of  
17 resources, and that's why the measures that are  
18 discussed in our testimony would be appropriate to  
19 solve the problem in the interim, but, of course, the  
20 ultimate solution is affordable permanent housing.  
21 Thank you very much.

22 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
23 Joshua, for your testimony. I'm going to turn now to  
24 Catherine Trapani for testimony.

25 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

2 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Good morning. My name  
3 is Catherine Trapani, the Executive Director of  
4 Homeless Services United, a coalition of 50 nonprofit  
5 mission-driven organizations serving New Yorkers  
6 across the 5 boroughs. Thank you for holding this  
7 important hearing. At HSU, we are proud of the work  
8 our member agencies do day in and day out to support  
9 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. We thank the  
10 Council for your work in advocating for appropriate  
11 resources and comprehensive solutions to meet their  
12 needs.

13 While there have been a lot of new  
14 efforts touted in press releases about how best to  
15 steer persons living on the street into shelters or,  
16 perhaps, just out of sight, we know that the best way  
17 to get people inside is to offer them the kinds of  
18 placement options they want to go into. I'm grateful  
19 to the leadership of the Council to advocate for  
20 additional funding for safe haven and stabilization  
21 beds to create these types of resources, and I'm  
22 pleased to see Mayor Adams include funding in the  
23 executive budget for them. It would be incredibly  
24 helpful if all Members of the Council could work with  
25 our members, DHS, and local Community Boards to

2 welcome these new facilities in neighborhoods across  
3 the city. We know what works and we know that well-  
4 run shelters make good neighbors. If you want folks  
5 off the streets and coming inside, every community  
6 must do their part to welcome new shelters and safe  
7 havens to support those who need them. Recent  
8 cancellations of 3 projects as of this morning caving  
9 to NIMBY pressure does not bode well to meet these  
10 goals, and, if we're serious about doing this work,  
11 it cannot continue. More outreach is not the answer  
12 if there's no beds to refer people to.

13           Next, if we're going to have this many  
14 new outreach teams and initiatives, coordination is  
15 key. Clients being repeatedly swept by police are  
16 making people feel less safe and the communities they  
17 build are being destabilized. Several teams chasing  
18 people offering services is overwhelming, and, if you  
19 do make headway only to have your client swept  
20 outside of your catchment area, service continuity is  
21 near impossible. We have several suggestions  
22 regarding areas of opportunity for both the city and  
23 state to employ to improve coordination between their  
24 overlapping outreach initiatives, details of which

2 will be emailed in our written testimony. Hospitals,  
3 mental health systems...

4 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

5 CATHERINE TRAPANI: May I continue? Thank  
6 you. Hospitals, mental health teams, outreach teams  
7 operated by DHS, nonprofits, and faith providers all  
8 must be able to share information and work together  
9 to identify opportunities for clients to come indoors  
10 and enroll in programs that they might find useful.  
11 The client's need should always be at the center of  
12 everything that we do, and seizing opportunities at  
13 natural points of engagement will reduce turning  
14 through and between systems to help people actually  
15 get inside. You'll also be hearing more from us about  
16 this in budget testimony later this cycle, but  
17 critical to our success is having a fairly  
18 compensated workforce to fill those vacancies that  
19 Council Member Restler spoke about. We have made some  
20 progress on the outreach teams, but our shelter staff  
21 have not received any meaningful increase, and those  
22 vacancies in critical positions like housing  
23 specialists, security, and the like are a real  
24 problem for us. Additionally, concerns at DHS about  
25 their own PEGs and hiring freezes which have slowed

2 down the processing of rental assistance and other  
3 initiatives so we really see some progress in the  
4 budget on wages for everybody.

5           Finally, I really want to thank the  
6 Council for introducing the legislation before the  
7 Committee today regarding reporting. It is imperative  
8 that at the dawn of this new administration that we  
9 have a real clear baseline for where we are and where  
10 we hope to go, and we strongly support all the bills  
11 being introduced and have some suggestions on how to  
12 strengthen them further which will also be emailed at  
13 the conclusion of the hearing.

14           Thank you very much for your work and  
15 attention to this critical issue, and I look forward  
16 to working with you and thank you for the extra time.

17           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
18 much, Catherine, for your testimony. I'm now going to  
19 turn to the last panelist in this panel, Tierra  
20 Labrada.

21           SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

22           TIERRA LABRADA: Hello, Chair Ayala and  
23 Members of the Committee. I'm Tierra Labrada, the  
24 Associate Director of Advocacy and Outreach at the  
25 Supportive Housing Network of New York. I'm going to

2 apologize in advance because I know my testimony is  
3 going to go just a bit over 2 minutes.

4 Our members provide housing and support  
5 services to people exiting shelters or street  
6 homelessness. With the help of tens of thousands of  
7 city-contracted human service workers, our members  
8 serve more than 35,000 formerly homeless individuals  
9 and families in the 5 boroughs. In response to our  
10 members' concerns last year over the lagging  
11 referrals from the HRA, we conducted an informal  
12 survey where we determined that there were at least  
13 2,500 units sitting empty. We took these findings and  
14 concerns to the city and are grateful that the  
15 administration has worked collaboratively with us to  
16 address this issue, but there is still much work to  
17 do. While we have been working to streamline  
18 procedures, the city also needs to invest the  
19 financial resources into the systems, human capital,  
20 and support services needed to create a fully  
21 functioning referral and placement system. We are  
22 encouraged by the 3.5 million in FY-22 and 5.8  
23 million in Fy-23 in the executive budget for  
24 expediting supportive housing placements at DSS, but  
25 additional action is needed to address the current



2 crisis. The city should do the following: One, match  
3 the federal investment into the Coordinated  
4 Assessment and Placement System, also known as CAPS.  
5 CAPS determines eligibility and makes recommendations  
6 for various housing options. Although the city has  
7 developed this sophisticated system, the majority of  
8 the work to move someone from shelter into supportive  
9 housing including reporting and confirming the  
10 vacancy, matching eligibility and scheduling an  
11 interview is still being done manually. If the city  
12 invested in the system, we could speed the process  
13 exponentially.

14 Two, institute a cost-of-living  
15 adjustment for supportive housing staff. Chronic  
16 underfunding of our sector has led to a staggering 20  
17 percent staff vacancy rate within the supportive  
18 housing workforce. We are facing a real recruitment  
19 and retention crisis, which is a primary factor  
20 impeding our ability to move quickly people from  
21 shelter or the street into permanent supportive  
22 housing. Recently, the governor announced a...

23 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

24 TIERRA LABRADA: COLA increase for the  
25 sector. This means that state-contracted staff

2 working directly alongside city-contracted staff will  
3 see an increase in their wages while their colleagues  
4 get nothing. This is unconscionable. The city needs  
5 to at least match the state's 5.4 annual increase.

6           Lastly, invest in mobile treatment teams  
7 for supportive housing residents. As a result of the  
8 pandemic, the mental health and substance use  
9 services that our community need have only  
10 intensified, and underfunded and understaffed  
11 supportive housing programs struggled to keep up.  
12 Investments in additional mobile treatment teams,  
13 which include medical and behavioral health  
14 professionals as well as peers specifically targeted  
15 for supportive housing tenants, are necessary.

16           You'll see some longer explanations in  
17 our written response, and I want to thank you, Chair  
18 Ayala and the Members of the City Council for your  
19 continued support and recognition of the need for  
20 supportive housing and the support of our workforce.  
21 Thank you.

22           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thanks,  
23 Tierra, for your testimony.

24           Chair Ayala, do you have anything you  
25 want to add for this panel or ask?

2 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I don't want to add  
3 anything, but I just wanted to thank the panelists  
4 for sticking it through through the entire hearing  
5 and for continuing to be a voice for those that need  
6 us to be their voices. Thank you, thank you for the  
7 work that you do.

8 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thanks again  
9 to this entire panel.

10 I am now going to call on our next panel.  
11 Our next panel will be in the following order Patrick  
12 Boyle, Lauren Galloway, and Deborah Berkman. Again,  
13 the order of testimony will be Patrick Boyle, Lauren  
14 Galloway, and Deborah Berkman. Beginning now with  
15 Patrick Boyle. Over to Patrick.

16 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

17 PATRICK BOYLE: Hi. Thank you so much.  
18 Thank you to the Chair for giving us the opportunity  
19 to deliver this testimony today on a really, really  
20 important topic to Volunteers of America. My name is  
21 Patrick Boyle. I'm an Assistant Vice President here  
22 with Volunteers of America, housing developer, human  
23 services organization with a mission towards ending  
24 homelessness in the greater New York area, and that's  
25 really our charge. As has been expressed throughout

2 this meeting the unsheltered homeless really run on a  
3 spectrum. There's really no one type of individual or  
4 one approach, but we do know through our experience,  
5 we run a safe haven, we run an assessment shelter, we  
6 run a variety of transitional housing as well as  
7 permanent supportive housing so we know kind of  
8 through that spectrum things that work, and we do  
9 applaud the Council and the administration with  
10 leadership from the Chair and others on the  
11 additional funding for the safe haven and  
12 stabilization beds, which are an important, kind of  
13 emerging model for a low-barrier entry that is really  
14 helpful for certain people that for a variety of  
15 justifiable reasons find themselves resistant to  
16 other kinds of shelter. It's a fact that more people  
17 than ever are coming through our assessment shelters  
18 and, in fact, through our entire spectrum of housing  
19 with really severe mental health concerns so we need  
20 to find a better way to link hospitals' communication  
21 with the sites, with the agencies to make sure people  
22 are getting the help they need and to find other ways  
23 to fund mental health professionals really at all the  
24 sites. We have them at some, but we really need

2 people on site to make sure that people's mental  
3 health concerns are being addressed.

4           Finally, it's been said by many other  
5 speakers, but really all the recommendations you're  
6 hearing today, they will fail without cost-of-living  
7 adjustments and just pay for human service workers.  
8 You can have all the best policies and processes in  
9 the world, if the people aren't funded appropriately,  
10 we'll continue to lose staff at high levels, we can't  
11 staff these programs appropriately, and we and other  
12 providers...

13           SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

14           PATRICK BOYLE: Will stop going for  
15 opportunities that the city puts out if they're not  
16 going to be funded at levels that are above poverty  
17 wages for our staff. We thank the chair with her  
18 leadership on that throughout, and we really, really  
19 need to see that in the budget that's coming up first  
20 and foremost. Thank you so much for your time.

21           DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Absolutely, and  
22 thank you for raising that because that's an  
23 important part of this entire conversation. Staff is  
24 necessary to do the work, and we need to properly

2 compensate them so thank you so much for bringing  
3 that out.

4 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you for  
5 your testimony, Patrick. I am now going to turn to  
6 Lauren Galloway. Over to Lauren.

7 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

8 LAUREN GALLOWAY: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Lauren Galloway, and I she, her, and hers  
10 pronouns. I'm the Advocacy Coordinator for the  
11 Coalition for Homeless Youth. The Coalition for  
12 Homeless Youth has advocated for the needs for  
13 runaway and homeless youth for over 40 years. We're  
14 comprised of 65 providers of services for youth  
15 across New York state, specifically with 29 members  
16 here in New York City. Thank you, Chair Ayala and the  
17 rest of the Committee for holding today's hearing and  
18 for the Council's ongoing support of youth  
19 experiencing homelessness in New York City.

20 I'll be submitting longer written  
21 testimony about the crisis of youth homelessness and  
22 our full recommendations but will focus my verbal  
23 remarks on the Intro 211, Intro 212, and 1077.  
24 However, before I talk about the legislation, I would  
25 like to echo the recommendations made by our members

2 at Safety Net Projects, Legal Aid Society as well as  
3 our allies at the Coalition for Homeless and New  
4 Destinies regarding the treatment and needed support  
5 for people living on the streets. When we as a city  
6 treat anyone as less than, specifically those that  
7 live on the street, we are doing harm. The harm  
8 includes to youth and young adults experiencing this  
9 homelessness. We cannot solve homelessness without  
10 housing, and this administration is simply moving  
11 people out of sight does nothing but harm.

12           Just to go into Intro 211, we fully  
13 support this bill. Unsheltered homeless youth  
14 experience unjust experiences daily, especially in  
15 terms of housing. We need to create a positive impact  
16 on the way we track exits from DYCD systems for  
17 homeless youth and young adults because there is no  
18 one size fits all form for housing instability, and  
19 we need to have an idea of the numbers of people who  
20 are in need of housing without speaking for what  
21 housing looks like for them.

22           As far as Intro 212, we are also fully in  
23 support of this bill. Homeless is an experience, not  
24 a system, and we need to start by reporting it in  
25 that way so Intro 212 will require the city to have

2 one census for people experiencing homelessness from  
3 all systems so Intro 212 would be a step towards  
4 changing this in addition to capturing other  
5 important data sets that would help us as a city  
6 identify...

7 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

8 LAUREN GALLOWAY: Is it okay if I keep  
9 doing my final thoughts?

10 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Yes, go ahead.

11 LAUREN GALLOWAY: Thank you. But  
12 identifying critical gaps in our approach in meeting  
13 the needs of youth and young adults.

14 Lastly, for 1077, we're fully in support  
15 of this bill. For far too long, homeless youth were  
16 not eligible for the vast majority of vouchers, but,  
17 since passing of Intro 2405, youth now have access to  
18 CityFHEPS vouchers, gaining permanent housing.  
19 Without gaining a full (INAUDIBLE) account of those  
20 using rental assistance, we cannot understand the  
21 scope of the issue. When referring to the system is  
22 slowing and flowing, we have to stop and ask what  
23 youth are experiencing and not only do that in a  
24 brief time as possible.



2 Thank you so much, and I look forward to  
3 our continued partnership. Thank you for the extra  
4 time.

5 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you for  
6 your testimony, Lauren. Now going to turn to Deborah  
7 Berkman for testimony, and Deborah will be followed  
8 by the next panel, and I'll call them now just so  
9 everyone has a heads up. The next panel following  
10 Deborah Berkman will be Gabriela Sandoval Requena,  
11 Oksana Miranova (phonetic), and Beatrice Simpkins. I  
12 am now going to call the last panelist on this panel,  
13 Deborah Berkman.

14 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

15 DEBORAH BERKMAN: Thank you very much.  
16 Chair Ayala, Council Members, and Staff, good  
17 morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My  
18 name is Deb Berkman, and I'm the Coordinating  
19 Attorney of the Shelter Advocacy Initiative and  
20 NYLAG. Most of my clients are those experiencing  
21 unsheltered homelessness. In any discussion about  
22 unsheltered homelessness, the most critical point to  
23 emphasize is that people do not choose to sleep  
24 outside. Rather, they're forced to because available  
25 shelter cannot accommodate their needs. While

2 sleeping outside, my clients have been subject to  
3 dangers that are just too numerous to recall. My  
4 clients are regularly robbed and assaulted while  
5 sleeping. One of my clients witnessed another man he  
6 slept outside with have lighter fluid poured on his  
7 foot and sat on fire. My clients are woken and  
8 harassed by police officers and often arrested for  
9 trespass and for other trivial offenses that  
10 essentially criminalize homelessness. They're food  
11 insecure and they're malnourished. Most of my clients  
12 experiencing unsheltered homelessness are in chronic  
13 pain from sleeping outside or in any other spaces not  
14 meant for sleeping. My clients suffer from skin  
15 conditions due to exposure to the elements, and  
16 almost all of them have numerous chronic illnesses.  
17 If they didn't suffer from mental illness prior to  
18 becoming street homeless, the trauma of sleeping  
19 outside and being constantly on alert has caused most  
20 of them severe anxiety. The barrier for many of these  
21 clients coming inside is that the vast majority of  
22 the DHS single adult shelter system is in congregate  
23 settings, or dorm settings, which can have as many as  
24 100 people sharing a room. Almost all of my clients  
25 experiencing street homelessness stay outside because

2 they can't live in congregate shelter due to past  
3 trauma or mental illness. These people would and they  
4 do come inside when they're offered a semi-private or  
5 a private room in a safe haven or a stabilization  
6 placement, but there are far too few of these  
7 placements, leaving thousands of people who are  
8 willing to come inside without a viable option other  
9 than sleeping outside. The clear solution is for the  
10 city to significantly increase single room safe haven  
11 and stabilization bed capacity, and, although these  
12 assignments are more costly, once clients come inside  
13 and are able to be stabilized, DHS will likely have a  
14 much greater success at transitioning people into  
15 permanent housing. Additionally..

16 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

17 DEBORAH BERKMAN: I have longer comments,  
18 but I will submit them via writing. Thank you very  
19 much for the opportunity.

20 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Thank you, Deborah.

21 DEBORAH BERKMAN: Thanks.

22 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
23 Deborah, and thank you to this entire panel for your  
24 testimony.

2 I will now call up our next panel. Our  
3 next panel will be in the following order Gabriela  
4 Sandoval Requena, Oksana Miranova, and Beatrice  
5 Simpkins. Over now to Gabriela.

6 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

7 GABRIELA SANDOVAL REQUENA: Good  
8 afternoon, Deputy Speaker Ayala and Members of the  
9 Committee of General Welfare. Thank you for your  
10 leadership and for the opportunity to testify on  
11 behalf of New Destiny Housing. My name is Gabriela  
12 Sandoval Requena, and I am the Senior Policy Analyst  
13 at New Destiny. Our mission is really to end the  
14 cycle of homelessness and abuse for domestic violence  
15 survivors, and we do this by developing housing for  
16 homeless survivors, assisting those who are fleeing  
17 abuse to obtain subsidies and find apartments, and by  
18 advocating for more housing resources, and New  
19 Destiny is also a co-convener of the Family  
20 Homelessness Coalition. We'd like to express support  
21 for all the Intros presented today, especially 211,  
22 which will increase transparency and accountability  
23 to all city shelter systems by centralizing shelter  
24 census data and requiring all systems to report on  
25 exits and more. It is long overdue for the city to

2 create one combined census of all 5 shelter systems  
3 that shows the true scope of homelessness. We simply  
4 cannot solve a problem that we fail to measure  
5 correctly. While Local Law 37 of 2011 requires city  
6 agencies to produce multiple reports on utilization,  
7 there is a significant lack of uniformity in the  
8 methodology and the frequency. This inconsistency  
9 makes it impossible to combine the various reports  
10 into 1 census that counts all New Yorkers  
11 experiencing homelessness, and, as a result,  
12 agencies, legislative leaders, the press, and  
13 advocates inevitably focus attention, policy  
14 solutions, and resources on DHS which is the largest,  
15 most visible system at the expense of the thousands  
16 of New Yorkers including domestic violence survivors  
17 and youth living in other shelters. Capturing good  
18 exit data is also important so that the city can  
19 better monitor how housing stock is being used to  
20 house New York's most vulnerable residents and track  
21 recidivism trends, etc.

22 We'd also like to use this opportunity to  
23 thank the Council for their preliminary budget  
24 response and urge the Mayor to fulfill his promise to  
25 invest the 4 billion dollars per year to fund a

2 comprehensive affordable housing plan including 2.5  
3 billion for HPD.

4 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

5 GABRIELA SANDOVAL REQUENA: Just a few  
6 more seconds. Thank you. The number one solution to  
7 the homelessness crisis is permanent affordable  
8 housing like many of the advocates today have echoed.

9 On behalf of New Destiny, I would like to  
10 thank again the Council for the opportunity to  
11 testify. We will be submitting a more extensive  
12 written testimony and look forward to continue to  
13 work together, and I'm happy to answer questions you  
14 may have. Thank you so much.

15 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you  
16 Gabriela. It appears that Oksana is not on the Zoom  
17 right now so we will move on to Beatrice Simpkins.  
18 Over to Beatrice.

19 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

20 BEATRICE SIMPKINS: Hi. Good morning,  
21 everyone. My name is Beatrice Simpkins. I'm the Chief  
22 Program Officer for the Partnership to End  
23 Homelessness on whose behalf I'm speaking today. The  
24 Partnership is focused on preventing and ultimately  
25 ending homelessness via housing, health education,

2 and changing the public narrative. I want to thank  
3 Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala and the Members of the  
4 Committee on General Welfare for the opportunity to  
5 testify today, and we support any effort to improve  
6 data and transparency in the shelter system that will  
7 help all of us be informed and be able to do better  
8 for the people that we serve. The City Council is  
9 poised to push for change and how the city  
10 understands, addresses, and corrects the issue of  
11 homelessness. For the past 40 years, the Partnership  
12 has been on the frontlines of addressing the needs of  
13 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, and what we've  
14 learned is that prevention is the best way to end  
15 homelessness. It works. It's most effective. It's the  
16 most cost-effective, and it's the most humanitarian  
17 solution. Prevention means safeguarding people in  
18 their existing homes via rental assistance and other  
19 similar measures. It means safeguarding the state's  
20 stock of affordable homes, the investment in  
21 affordable housing. Family homelessness represents  
22 the majority of homelessness because of domestic  
23 violence, overcrowding, evictions, the three main  
24 feeders of homelessness in New York City, and  
25 disproportionately, of course, this affects women and

2 children. When people enter the shelter system, their  
3 lives are disrupted, the adults, the children, and  
4 often that lasts for generations.

5           In conclusion, we need to move beyond  
6 reactionary policies and strategies and towards an  
7 approach to solve homelessness that includes greater  
8 investment and the creation and preservation of  
9 affordable housing and supportive housing, legal  
10 assistance, mental health, and other public  
11 assistance measures that address the root causes of  
12 homelessness. The Partnership is ready to be your  
13 partner in this, and we thank you for the opportunity  
14 to testify today.

15           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
16 much, Beatrice, for your testimony, and thank you to  
17 this entire panel for speaking today.

18           I'm now going to call on the following 2  
19 panels just so everyone has a heads up.

20           The next panel will be in the following  
21 order, Brendan Cheney (phonetic), Nicole McVinua, and  
22 Craig Hughes, and then the panel after that will be  
23 Camilla Broderick, Sanne Wright, and Towaki Komatsu  
24 will be the last person.



2           Again, this panel will be Brendan Cheney,  
3 Nicole McVinua, and Craig Hughes. I will now turn it  
4 over to Brendan Cheney for testimony.

5           SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

6           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: It appears  
7 that Brendan Cheney is no longer on the Zoom so I  
8 will now turn it over to Nicole McVinua.

9           SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

10          AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Over to Nicole  
11 McVinua.

12          NICOLE MCVINUA: Hi. Good afternoon, Chair  
13 Ayala and Members of the Committee. My name is Nicole  
14 McVinua, and I am the Director of Policy at Urban  
15 Pathways. Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
16 today. Urban Pathways is a nonprofit homeless  
17 services and supportive housing provider. We assist  
18 single adults through a combination of street  
19 outreach, drop-in services, safe havens, extended  
20 stay residences, and permanent supportive housing.  
21 Last year, Urban Pathways served over 3,900 New  
22 Yorkers in need.

23           I want to begin my testimony by clearly  
24 stating that no one chooses to be homeless.  
25 Homelessness, and especially street homelessness, is

2 a failure of the social safety net, not the  
3 individual, and the city must refrain from  
4 characterizing people residing in the subway or on  
5 the street as criminals or causes of increased rates  
6 of crime. It is simply not the case.

7           Urban Pathways' extensive experience of  
8 street outreach has led us to focus our street-facing  
9 services on the drop-in center and safe haven models  
10 of service for single adults. We do not operate any  
11 congregate shelters. We really focus on this model as  
12 a low-barrier to entry that we believe is just more  
13 effective. So with this, we're thrilled to see the  
14 investment to create more, but the funding for the  
15 expansion of these services has to be coupled with a  
16 reevaluation of the RFP for these programs and the  
17 funding allocated to pay the employees and the  
18 contracts. If this is not done, we will not be able  
19 to staff these programs. Urban Pathways just opened a  
20 new safe haven, and we cannot fill 22 out of the  
21 total 37 positions that are necessary to run the  
22 program. Our contract starts, security, maintenance,  
23 cooks, really essential staff at just 15 dollars an  
24 hour, and, with the open job market, folks...

25           SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

2           NICOLE MCVINUA: Do not want to accept  
3 these jobs, and so I have much more information in my  
4 written testimony which I've submitted, but that's  
5 really what I want to highlight. We will not be able  
6 to staff these programs if the wages are not  
7 increased in the DHS contracts. Thank you for your  
8 time.

9           AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thanks,  
10 Nicole, for your testimony. I'll now turn to Craig  
11 Hughes for testimony.

12           SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

13           CRAIG HUGHES: Hi. Thank you, Chair Ayala  
14 and Members of the Committee on General Welfare, for  
15 the opportunity to testify to you today. My name is  
16 Craig Hughes. I'm a Social Worker with the Safety Net  
17 Project at Urban Justice. If you'll bear with me,  
18 this testimony is going to be slightly unorthodox.  
19 We're submitting written testimony, but it would be a  
20 lost opportunity not to correct the record. I'll go  
21 slightly over but not in a disrespectful way and will  
22 be as quick as possible.

23           To be blunt, Orwell would have been proud  
24 of the administration's performance today. War is  
25 peace, trust building is an exercise in endlessly

2 harassing people, and dignity is an encampment raid  
3 with a garbage truck and dozens of SRG officers. The  
4 administration has shown it is "laser-focused" on one  
5 thing above all else, PR spin aimed at people not  
6 believing their own lying eyes, getting away with  
7 treating homeless people however it wants, and  
8 fulfilling the goals of business leaders to get  
9 homeless people out of sight. It may be worth  
10 recalling Rudy Giuliani's recollection on his  
11 homeless policies, and I'll quote from an article a  
12 few years ago. "You chase 'em, and you chase 'em, and  
13 you chase 'em, and you chase 'em, and they either get  
14 the treatment they need or you chase 'em out of the  
15 city." Unfortunately, that has been the policy that  
16 we have seen in the city for the last 25 years which  
17 is an endless effort to chase people around, out of  
18 the subways, off the streets, out of the parks, out  
19 of public sight, everyone in the business community  
20 tends to come up with some new way of talking about  
21 feeling burdened by having to see homeless people,  
22 and, unfortunately, our politicians are often echoing  
23 that, and it's very troubling.

24 I'm just going to correct a few specific  
25 things for the record here. One, the administration

2 is talking about in terms of opening safe havens.

3 What it wasn't acknowledging is that it is

4 simultaneously closing hundreds of single rooms right

5 now so while there's a future effort to open up some

6 number of stabilization and safe haven beds...

7 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

8 CRAIG HUGHES: I will be just a couple

9 more moments if that's okay, Chair. While the

10 administration is stating its plans to invest and

11 open up new safe haven or stabilization beds with an

12 unknown number of beds per room, we know at Safety

13 Net Project we have clients in multiple hotels, the

14 administration is closing hundreds of single rooms

15 right now, and at some point the closure of the

16 single rooms starts to creep up into the number of

17 safe haven and stabilization beds they are reportedly

18 opening. Right now, what the Mayor is doing is

19 closing rooms, and we know that will land people on

20 the street. They didn't acknowledge that, but there's

21 an increasing number of sights in hotels with single

22 rooms that are being closed right now.

23 Secondly, it's important to note that the

24 numbers that were not advantageous for them to give

25 you were numbers they did not have record. For

2 example, they did not have how many people are  
3 staying are in these "placements," whatever the  
4 placements may be. I appreciated, Chair Ayala, that  
5 you actually asked them some specificity there, but  
6 it's interesting that they didn't know how long  
7 people are currently actually staying. That's very  
8 strategic on their part. It'll be interesting to see  
9 if they get back. Unfortunately, we know from the  
10 past that typically people don't stay unless there's  
11 very specific access to environments they've gotten,  
12 particularly single rooms.

13 I have been personally on many sweeps. We  
14 go to sweeps to support people that are going through  
15 them and to try to do our best to advocate for  
16 people. I will tell you that hands down it is not the  
17 case the administration is offering people resources  
18 that the previous administration didn't. In fact,  
19 it's the exact same procedure that we saw under the  
20 last administration. As policy, and I had an  
21 interaction with Joint Command Center staff just a  
22 week or 2 ago at a sweep, as policy DHS does not  
23 assist people during sweeps with storage. They do not  
24 do it. What they say is go to HRA. One of the most  
25 important that people on the street need is easy

2 access to storage, but opening a storage unit in New  
3 York City is very hard. We will go as SNP with people  
4 during sweeps and bring them to storage units to open  
5 storage. DHS will not do it as policy, and the fact  
6 that they misshape that and say they do otherwise is  
7 questionable given they're testifying under oath.

8 I would add that they do not have  
9 translation services. We, for example, will use  
10 translation lines at the encampment sweeps where we  
11 will translate for people. We've translated for  
12 people in Bengali, we've translated for people in  
13 Spanish. If JCC or outreach staff don't speak those  
14 languages, they don't do that. What you see are these  
15 very awkward interactions where they're showing up  
16 with cars, sometimes beaming lights are people in  
17 encampments, sometimes under bridges, but there's  
18 actually no translation services typically offered,  
19 and those notices, having personally seen dozens and  
20 dozens and dozens of them are not translated. Maybe  
21 they're translated somewhere. They're never put in  
22 the place where the person is being swept. I was  
23 working not too long ago with a woman who speaks  
24 Hindi. The notice was written in English repeatedly  
25 put on the pole near her encampment in English and

2 she literally did not understand what it meant  
3 because it was not put in her language. They are not  
4 being accurate when they are telling you they are  
5 doing these things. This is a PR spin.

6 I would also add, and, Council Member,  
7 perhaps you can sympathize with this, I don't know,  
8 but I know that I have spoken with other Council  
9 Members who can. Unfortunately, with encampments,  
10 they say call 311 and then the Council Members will  
11 often 311 and work with local outreach teams to try  
12 to help someone, some variation of help.  
13 Unfortunately, in New York City, as directly related  
14 to the HOMESTAT program which was modeled on  
15 COMPSTAT, it is a broken Windows program for homeless  
16 services, unfortunately when someone calls 311 they  
17 wrap people into the sweeps operations. This isn't a  
18 situation where 311 gets called and people are gently  
19 helped in. It's a situation where Council Members get  
20 deputized, civilians get deputized to unfortunately  
21 be part of a policing operation for street homeless  
22 people that doesn't get them help. It does get them  
23 wrapped up in sweeps.

24 Finally, 2 final points here, and I  
25 apologize for going on. In terms of supportive



2 housing beds, one of the most important things that,  
3 we have been very vocal at SNP about supportive  
4 housing and what doesn't often get talked about. One  
5 of the most important things that doesn't get talked  
6 about with supportive housing is that the people in  
7 encampments are the people who will almost never get  
8 actually into supportive housing, and the people on  
9 the subways who are getting targeted by cops, they're  
10 almost never going to get into supportive housing,  
11 and the reason for that is that the supportive  
12 housing industry is shaped in such a way that people  
13 who are struggling the most are systematically weeded  
14 out from accessing it. Sometimes in social services  
15 it gets called creaming or cherry-picking. We, every  
16 year, do FOIAs with DSS on the reasons people are  
17 rejected from supportive housing, and very often it  
18 is for the exact same reasons they're eligible for  
19 supportive housing. If supportive housing doesn't  
20 allow people who are struggling the most to access it  
21 because providers determine that they shouldn't allow  
22 them to be housed in their own specific unit that  
23 they're interviewing for then, unfortunately, we know  
24 that people will end up in Rikers. I've had at least  
25 1 client who's passed away while waiting for

2 supportive housing. This is the kind of thing where  
3 we're not talking about what the nuts and bolts look  
4 like because the administration is talking in PR  
5 bullets, and, unfortunately, the supportive housing  
6 industry in general has evaded bringing up the fact  
7 that its own providers very often are the people who  
8 are refusing to house people directly from the  
9 street. We actually know that we can house people  
10 directly from the street and that you can go from  
11 subway to an apartment, but we have to be honest  
12 about having that conversation so that we can get to  
13 the point where people who are going through sweeps  
14 and things like that are actually offered the housing  
15 that they're demanding, like Mr. Grima was this  
16 morning when he said don't give me a shelter, give me  
17 an apartment, and actually that's something the city  
18 could do.

19           The final point I'll make is that there's  
20 a bill, and thank you, Chair Ayala, for reintroducing  
21 it, calling for a general homeless census. There are  
22 5 municipal shelter systems run by 4 city agencies.  
23 For decades, what has happened is that people that  
24 are not in the DHS system have been systematically  
25 left out of certain resources. That bill is very

2 important because creating a number that includes all  
3 5 of the municipal shelter systems run by the 4 city  
4 agencies in one number that the administration is  
5 accountable to, that will truly make a difference in  
6 making sure that everyone has access to resources  
7 because everyone will be someone the administration  
8 is accountable to and not able to hide by not  
9 acknowledging them as part of the homeless  
10 population.

11 Thank you. I'm sorry I took forever on  
12 this, but I appreciate your time.

13 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: No, I really  
14 appreciate your testimony. A lot of really valuable  
15 information there. You're right. Again, my  
16 frustration with all of this is that we have to  
17 listen impacted individuals a little bit more closely  
18 because they have the solutions, and we know where we  
19 should directing public dollars and where we should  
20 be directing all of our attention and I really  
21 appreciate a lot of the points that you guys have  
22 made today.

23 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
24 again, Nicole, and thank you, Craig, for your  
25 testimony.

2 I will now call on the next panel. The  
3 next panel will be in the following order. Camilla  
4 Broderick, Sanne Wright, followed by Towaki Komatsu.  
5 Over now to Camilla Borderick.

6 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

7 CAMILLA BRODERICK: Good morning, Chair  
8 Ayala and esteemed Council Members. My name is  
9 Camilla Broderick, and I'm honored to be one of the  
10 Community Navigators on the Community First Team. I'm  
11 here before you to discuss the Center for Court  
12 Innovations, Community First, and Rapid Engagements  
13 initiatives, both proposed to City Council in an  
14 effort to build out a continuum of care across  
15 different points of engagement with the justice  
16 system in the community and in the precinct  
17 respectively. Operating out of Midtown Community  
18 Court Project for the Center of Court Innovation, the  
19 Community First Team works with some of Manhattan's  
20 most vulnerable individuals, those who are homeless  
21 battling mental illness and/or substance use  
22 disorders. We meet community members where they're at  
23 in their own communities providing critical supports  
24 and services in an attempt to prevent engagement with  
25 law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

2 Using a client-centered approach, Community  
3 Navigators ensure the client's needs are met while  
4 maintaining their dignity and sense of self-worth.  
5 Community First works to link clients to social and  
6 wellness services while coordinating care through  
7 volunteer engagement built on relationships developed  
8 through a consistent outreach. Specifically,  
9 Community First employs Community Navigators like me  
10 who partner with community-based organizations to  
11 link individuals to social services, substance use  
12 treatment, and mental health support. Community  
13 Navigators make our program so special because of our  
14 direct lived and shared experiences that we draw from  
15 to build rapport with our clients. Community First  
16 focuses on a peer-support model that allows us to  
17 build a trusting and sustainable relationship. My  
18 past substance use and justice involvement allows me  
19 to foster deep connection to my clients and have a  
20 glimpse into some of the barriers that they may be  
21 facing that other outreach efforts may not consider.  
22 I'm especially proud of the harm-reduction work that  
23 I get to do through Community First. Among crucial  
24 basic necessities such as hygiene kits, clothes, and  
25 water, when we bring our outreach cart in the Times

2 Square area, it's stocked with naloxone and fentanyl  
3 test strips to train and distribute to community  
4 members. When I used opiates many years ago, these  
5 kits...

6 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

7 CAMILLA BRODERICK: Just a few more  
8 seconds. Sorry. These kits were not easy to obtain,  
9 and overdosing was practically a death sentence. Our  
10 harm-reduction approach drastically changes the  
11 accessibility of these skills, tools, and resources.  
12 This is an extremely important part of our outreach  
13 for me personally because it has the potential to  
14 save lives and reduce the stigma of substance use in  
15 the community, all while maintaining client agency.  
16 The work we do every day isn't easy, but I know we're  
17 making a real difference in our clients' lives and  
18 the community in Times Square, and, for those who may  
19 miss in our efforts, Midtown operates a rapid  
20 engagement initiative that encourages connection to  
21 tangible resources and important information at the  
22 point of arrest but before arraignment to streamline  
23 access to meaningful and timely support. Thank you.

24

25

2 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
3 Camilla, for your testimony. Now going to call Sanne  
4 Wright for testimony.

5 SANNE WRIGHT: Thank you. Good afternoon,  
6 Chair Ayala and esteemed Council Members of the  
7 Committee on General Welfare. My name is Sanne  
8 Wright, External Affairs Manager at the Times Square  
9 Alliance. I stand before you today on behalf of the  
10 Alliance to discuss Community First as well, an  
11 innovative pilot program that connects individuals  
12 experiencing homelessness to social services that  
13 support their transition off the street. After the  
14 pandemic emptied Times Square, we noted a significant  
15 increase in the number of individuals facing housing  
16 insecurity, homelessness, mental illness, and/or  
17 substance use disorders in our district. Amidst a  
18 national reckoning on criminal justice reform and the  
19 heightened vulnerability of this population due to  
20 COVID-19, it became increasingly clear that routing  
21 unsheltered individuals into the criminal justice  
22 system was inhumane and unsustainable. Instead, the  
23 Alliance approached Midtown Community Court, a  
24 program of the Center for Court Innovation with over  
25 25 years of experience engaging Midtown Manhattan's

2 most vulnerable individuals to implement a solution  
3 that offers a more holistic approach. With seed  
4 funding from the alliance, Community First launched  
5 in April 2021 in partnership with 2 additional social  
6 service organizations breaking ground on Fountain  
7 House. In July 2021, the program received funding  
8 from the Department of Homeless Services to continue  
9 its work for an additional year. Community First  
10 employs Community Navigators, most of whom share a  
11 lived experience with their clients to provide  
12 consistent outreach to people in need on our streets  
13 5 days a week, 12 hours a day. Navigators build trust  
14 by learning clients' stories, offering essentials  
15 like food, blankets, and bathroom facility access,  
16 and, over time, connecting them to long-term support  
17 like housing, employment, and/or drug treatment  
18 through the program's partnerships with Breaking  
19 Ground and Fountain House. To date, Navigators have  
20 given out clothing on 325 separate occasions, food on  
21 333 separate occasions, trained 28 community members  
22 in harm-reduction techniques, and made 92 referrals  
23 to partnering organizations. As a result of these  
24 interactions, 40 individuals have accepted long-term  
25 care including drug treatment, mental health care,



2 housing, and financial benefits. This data  
3 demonstrates that time spent building trusting...

4 SERGEANT LUGO: Time expired.

5 SANNE WRIGHT: Relationships, almost done,  
6 through consistent outreach is a key first step to  
7 addressing clients' more substantive needs, which  
8 ultimately must be met for successful transitions off  
9 the street. In a time of critical need, Community  
10 First demonstrated and continues to demonstrate  
11 strong coordination between nonprofits, Building  
12 Improvement Districts like the Alliance, and city  
13 agencies to sustainably support unsheltered New  
14 Yorkers. This model is easily replicated, and we hope  
15 to expand south of Times Square where there's a large  
16 population of people in need of the support and  
17 services Community First offers. However, with their  
18 funding from DHS set to expire at the end of June,  
19 additional financial support is critical. We are  
20 grateful for the city's contributions thus far and  
21 hope that they continue to support this work so that  
22 we see programs like these established between BIDs  
23 and community organizations across all 5 boroughs.  
24 Thank you.

2 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you so  
3 much to these panels for your testimony. I'm now  
4 going to turn to Towaki Komatsu for testimony.

5 SERGEANT LUGO: Starting time.

6 TOWAKI KOMATSU: With regards to the  
7 testimony that was provided to this hearing by Mr.  
8 Jenkins earlier today as well as Urban Pathways  
9 representative, they are basically lying to your  
10 face. Two days ago, I filed a petition for a writ of  
11 certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court against Urban  
12 Pathways, against HRA so the point is Urban Pathways  
13 has fraudulently sued me 3 times claiming that a  
14 valid lease agreement exists in spite of the fact  
15 that there hasn't. Urban Pathways and HRA jointly  
16 changed my lease agreement 2 days after it was  
17 signed. The point is, Miss Ayala, I've talked to you  
18 previously. You told me not to talk about pending  
19 litigation matters so with regards to FOIA requests,  
20 can you intercede on my behalf to have HRA perform  
21 its legal duty to comply with my FOIA requests that  
22 date back to issues from 2016. I mean it's a fair  
23 question. It's about the agenda for today's hearing,  
24 about having people moved into permanent housing. The  
25 point is if you take me out of the equation, if signs

2 an apartment lease agreement, HRA then changes that  
3 lease agreement after it's signed, and that lease  
4 agreement was for a private apartment with no  
5 roommate, there's going to be a roommate conflict and  
6 things are going to snowball. Point is, can you do  
7 something about that? Can you answer a question?

8 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I'm happy to  
9 discuss that after the hearing if you'd like.

10 TOWAKI KOMATSU: I contacted you. I  
11 haven't gotten a response.

12 DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: I haven't received  
13 an inquiry. Thank you.

14 AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thank you,  
15 Towaki, for your testimony and to this entire panel  
16 for your testimony.

17 At this time, if we have inadvertently  
18 missed anyone that would like to testify, if you can  
19 please use the Zoom raise hand function now, and we  
20 will call on you in the order your hand is raised.  
21 For anybody who we inadvertently missed.

22 All right, seeing no hands raised, Chair  
23 Ayala, we have concluded public testimony for this  
24 hearing. I will now turn to you for any closing  
25 remarks and then to close the hearing.

2                   DEPUTY SPEAKER AYALA: Absolutely. I just  
3 wanted to thank all of the advocates for being here  
4 today. I hope that you know that a lot of the work  
5 that we do and how we prioritize our public dollars  
6 and create policies is really based on a lot of the  
7 work that you do so thank you for that because I know  
8 that it isn't easy work. Obviously, we have a shared  
9 responsibility to do the right thing by unhoused New  
10 Yorkers, but we need to make sure that we're doing it  
11 in a way that truly makes a positive impact on the  
12 lives of the unhoused New Yorkers that we're  
13 discussing today, and I think that we got a lot of  
14 the answers that we wanted today but I think there  
15 are also a lot of unanswered questions that we need  
16 to continue to review and to hash out, but I welcome  
17 continued conversations with all of you in the next  
18 few months because I think that this is really one of  
19 those situations where we need all hands on deck and  
20 we need to work collaboratively to really find the  
21 solutions that we need. Thank you all for being here  
22 today. It was a pleasure hearing from all of you. I  
23 look forward to seeing you all soon.

24                   AMINTA KILAWAN, MODERATOR: Thanks,  
25 everyone, and this hearing is now concluded.

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date June 30, 2022