



Human Resources
Administration
Department of
Social Services

TESTIMONY

Robert Doar, Commissioner
Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services

Fiscal 2009 Proposed Executive Budget Hearing

*Joint Hearing of the New York City Council
General Welfare and Finance Committees*

May 13, 2008

Good morning Chairman de Blasio and Chairman Weprin and members of the General Welfare and Finance Committees. Joining me this morning is Kathleen Tyler, Director of HRA's Budget Office who has been responsible for preparing our budget submission this year. A task Kathleen has executed with great patience and perseverance.

Since I last testified two months ago, I am glad to say that we have a final State budget that includes some cuts but that is overall much more positive in the area of human services than initially expected. Thanks to the efforts of many, including Chairman de Blasio and other members of the City Council, the Legislature rejected the Executive's proposal to break the long-standing, equal cost sharing agreement between the State and the City for benefits in cash assistance. Retaining this balance was critical to not only our budget but also to the overall structure of how the public assistance programs operate in the State.

Also, I am very pleased that the legislature agreed to take advantage of new federal flexibility by increasing the amount of child support collections passed onto cash assistance families. Although there will be a cost to the City for this change, it is a very important step forward and something I have pushed for throughout my career.

Child Support Enforcement may be the most cost-effective human service program in the country. Every government dollar (city, state, and federal) spent in administrative costs leads to more than eleven dollars in collections. Here in New York City, due in part to the fact that the federal and state governments pay for more than 80 percent of the program costs, custodial parents receive approximately \$70 for every dollar of city tax levy invested. The program puts resources immediately into the hands of low-income families who need them - whether or not they are on welfare. In fact, our ongoing child support services assist more than 160,000 families who were formerly on cash assistance; and in 2007, we collected a record \$620 million of which \$580 million (94%) was given directly to families. Increasing the child support pass through will ensure that an even greater share of collections goes to families and not to recoup welfare payments.

However, not all news from the State was good. The legislature reduced overall State funding for the intensive services grant to re-engage sanctioned families from \$14 million down to \$3 million. Also, all costs for two-parent families on the Safety Net program have been shifted to

local districts and new limitations have been placed on the Work Incentive Funds within the Local Assistance Funds, basically taking away our ability to access the Fund. There is a 2 % across the board cut to state agencies (including contracts they have) and we are waiting to see more specifically how that will affect the City.

Revenue Maximization and Cost Reduction Process

Over the past several months we have engaged in two extensive exercises to maximize our revenue sources as well as identify cost reductions throughout our agency. These two exercises have resulted in \$75.9 million in savings in fiscal year (FY) 2008 and a total of \$232.7 million in savings over the period of FY2008 through FY2012. This includes savings within both the Financial Plan and the Executive budget.

In March I explained that we reduced vacancies as part of our earlier cost reduction process, but not in a way that will harm our ability to serve New Yorkers. HRA's current vacancy rate as of April 11, 2008 is 5.0 percent.

Caseload Trends

At this point I would like to update you on our overall caseload levels. Our cash assistance caseload is still at near historic lows at approximately 347,000 and job placements are steady, keeping pace with where we were at this time last year. As you know, our current welfare caseload represents a drop of more than one million fewer recipients since the peak welfare usage month of March 1995 and over 115,000 less recipients than it was at the start of the Bloomberg Administration.

Currently, there are over 1.1 million persons receiving Food Stamp benefits, of which over 582,000 do not receive cash assistance. As of last month the number of Food Stamp cases increased to 625,916, which is an increase of 32,027 cases since July 2007. This period coincides with the implementation of new strategies designed to make it easier for people to apply for and retain Food Stamp benefits. We have expanded the hours of operation of our offices and, with the cooperation of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger and the Food Bank implemented five community locations, made it easier to apply. We also offer telephone interviews both for working applicants and, in a phased implementation, for all recipients in Food

Stamp offices. Further we have worked to ensure that those who obtain employment and are ineligible for cash assistance retain Food Stamp benefits as a work support.

Enrollment in the Medicaid program continues at a very high level, indicating Medicaid's tremendous importance as a support for working New Yorkers. As of April 2008, almost 2.6 million City residents were covered by public health insurance programs administered by HRA of whom over 1.8 million are consumers not receiving Cash Assistance or federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Food Stamp Benefits and Nutrition

In March I went over some of our outreach efforts, new partnerships, and simplifications to the application and recertification process that have contributed to an increase in our non-cash assistance caseload. We are also working with both Speaker Quinn's Office and this Committee on a match of our Medicaid and Food Stamp rolls to identify and reach out to individuals who are potentially eligible for Food Stamp benefits and not receiving them. We believe that these efforts, along with new ones I will discuss shortly are important steps to making sure that low-income working families receive the support they need.

The Food Stamp Program

Most recently our outreach staff completed an initiative at the Food Change VITA site where tax return and Earned Income Tax Credits preparation assistance was provided. In its first year, and in a short period of several weeks, we were able to prescreen over 430 persons for Food Stamp benefits who had come in for tax return preparation assistance and may not have otherwise applied for the benefit.

We are also now expanding an initiative that was developed by one of our Food Stamp offices to better serve elderly and disabled SSI recipients who are automatically enrolled in the Food Stamp program through the New York Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP). Through NYSNIP, approximately 1,000 individuals a month who start receiving SSI are automatically enrolled in Food Stamp Program. (Since we must rely on data from the SSI process, they are usually at the minimum benefit levels of \$18 and \$24; participants are advised to submit information on their rent and utility expenses to see if they qualify for an increased benefit.)

Recognizing that relatively few individuals returned the expense information, staff from the Food Stamp office that serves SSI cases looked for a solution and began by working with the State to identify approximately 20,000 SSI recipients that were receiving the minimum benefit. The Office then developed a special mailing to this group that went out earlier this year and to date over 2,600 responses have been reviewed. Of those, over 70% have received a benefit increase, boosting their benefits to at least \$100 monthly. The largest single group, comprising about 40% of the returns, went from a benefit level of near \$20 monthly to \$162 monthly. This represents over \$1,600 in additional food assistance annually for each individual in this group. We have expanded the project and are now working with senior centers to try and get information from those who have yet to submit any verification. I also want to point out that this effort was developed AND implemented by the manager of our F15 Center, Mr. Milton Oliver, and his staff solely through their own initiative. Mr. Oliver is sitting with us today and I would like to publicly thank him; he is an asset to HRA and of course the many SSI recipients who now have additional Food Stamp benefits.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

Our current allocation for the Emergency Food Assistance Program is \$8.6 million, which includes the additional million that was announced in November. Recently, 13 new programs were added with allocations totaling \$49,650, bringing current EFAP membership to 515 active programs. We also want to thank the Council for their support of the EFAP enhancement grants in FY'08 where 100 programs received this funding to purchase equipment and make minor structural improvements. Also, although not finalized, we have become more confident about the infusion of new federal resources. As you know, the present Farm bill includes \$1.2 billion in increased funding to food banks. I understand that a conference agreement will be voted on by Congress this week and its passage could bring much needed assistance to the City's food banks as well as important changes to the Food Stamp program.

The WeCARE Program

I think it is important that I report to you on the latest developments concerning our WeCARE Program, HRA's innovative effort to address the needs of our welfare clients who have clinical barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Both of our WeCARE contracts have been renewed and those renewals have been approved by the City's Comptroller's Office. As both of our partners have shown marked improvements in each of their key performance indicators, our combined employment placements are up 41 percent from a year ago; and our federal disabilities awards are up 39 percent from a year ago.

We have also now put in place a protocol for independent quarterly reviews to be conducted by New York County Health Services Review Organization. This important element of contract monitoring combined with our ongoing monthly meetings and performance monitoring gives us a very solid basis on which to monitor these contracts in the coming year.

Economic Support from Both Parents

The final issue I would like to address is one that I first spoke to you about last May. Over the past year, I have focused attention on making sure children from single-parent households receive the emotional and financial support of both parents. To a very large degree the economic divide between poor and non-poor is a function of the extent to which families have the benefit of two incomes, and unfortunately the single parent families we serve are too often left out of that benefit. That's why, we at HRA, have begun a series of initiatives targeted at this population of mostly young fathers who have not benefited from previous improvements to social policy.

Working with these young, low-income fathers requires different approaches and techniques on our part. This means adding new components onto our present employment and training programs. It also means creating free events and activities in the City that encourage healthy relationships between dads and their children; a simple concept but one that requires the buy-in of the whole family and everyone in the human services community as well. It also means making sure that non-custodial parents understand the child support system so that orders are set correctly to avoid unnecessary arrears and ultimately, so that responsibility is taken and support is paid for the child. Finally, for those who are involved in the criminal justice system, it means reaching out to fathers prior to release or as they leave prison for job preparation skills training and important work supports such as Food Stamp benefits and Medicaid.

Employment and Fatherhood

The Parks Department is also assisting in the agency's efforts to improve services to non custodial parents. Within its Park Opportunity Program, Parks has created a specialized program focused on non custodial fathers. The Parks Works for the Dad program emphasizes employment while providing counseling and information on developing a relationship with their children and children's mother, and how to be a better parent. We believe this combination of employment and parenting skills is an excellent model and look forward to replicating it.

NYC Dads

In addition, HRA is the lead agency for NYC Dads, a new, city-wide public education campaign. A website will provide information on parenting guidance, community resources, as well as inexpensive and free activities to do with children. Next month is also our second annual Father's Day picnic at Keyspan Park in Coney Island, one of our largest events of the year that invites dads from fatherhood programs throughout the City to participate with their children.

As I mentioned, we are still at the initial stages of many of these initiatives but will continue expanding our work with these young fathers. We are also conducting several studies in this arena and look forward to updating you on both the research and the initiatives at next year's hearing.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

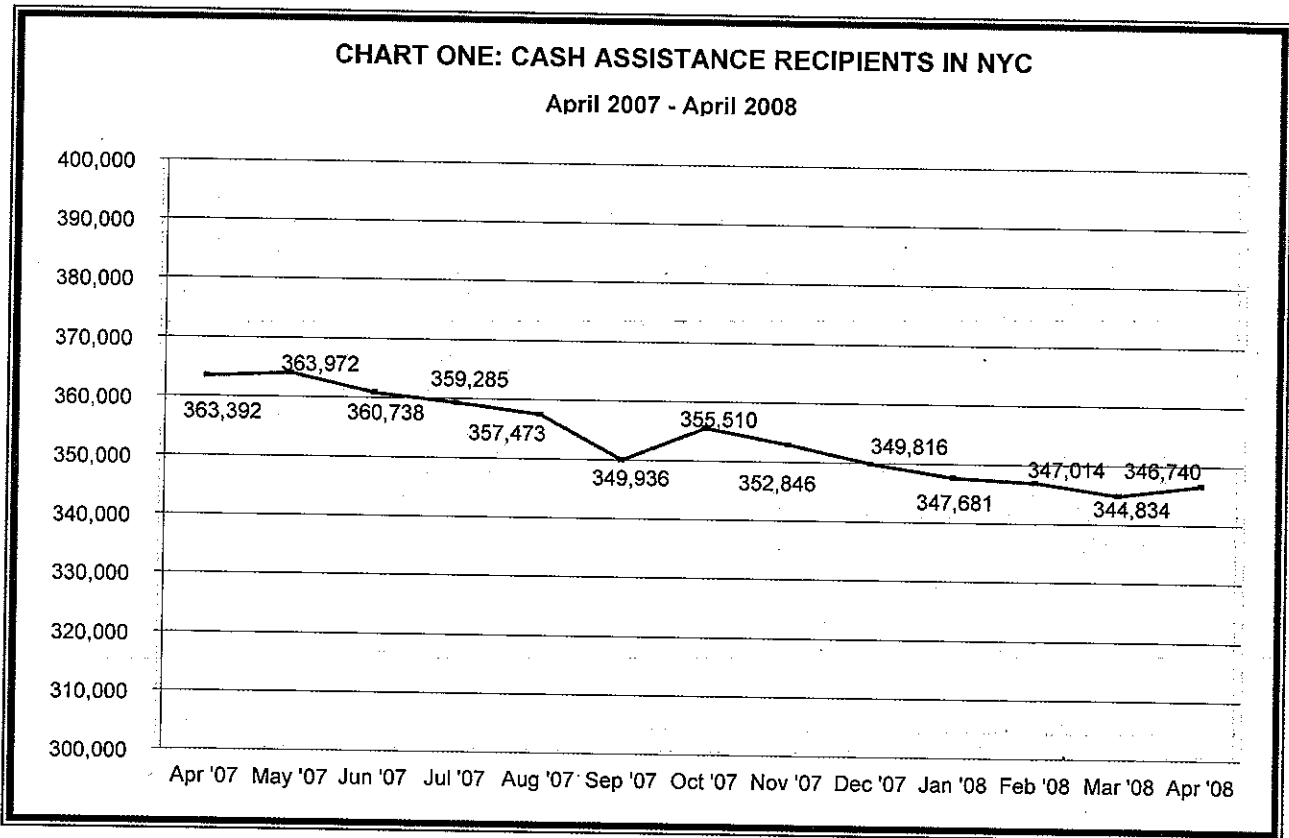
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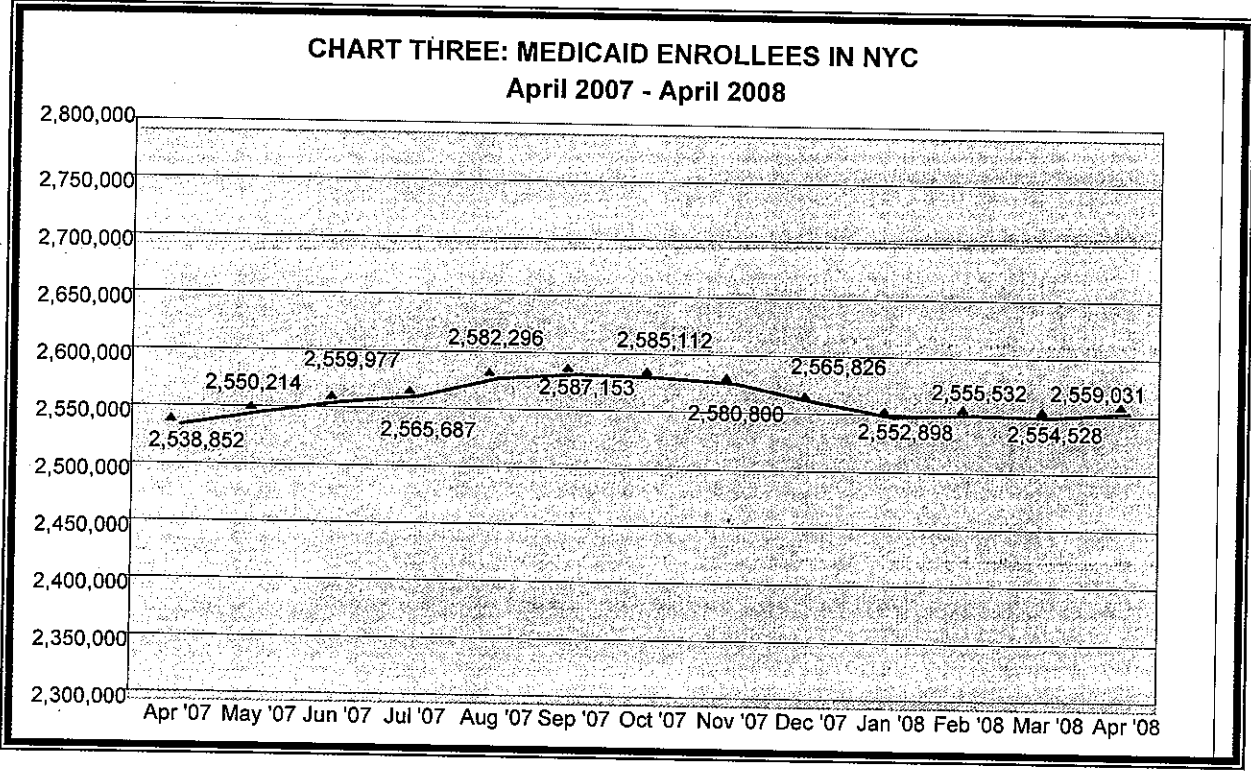
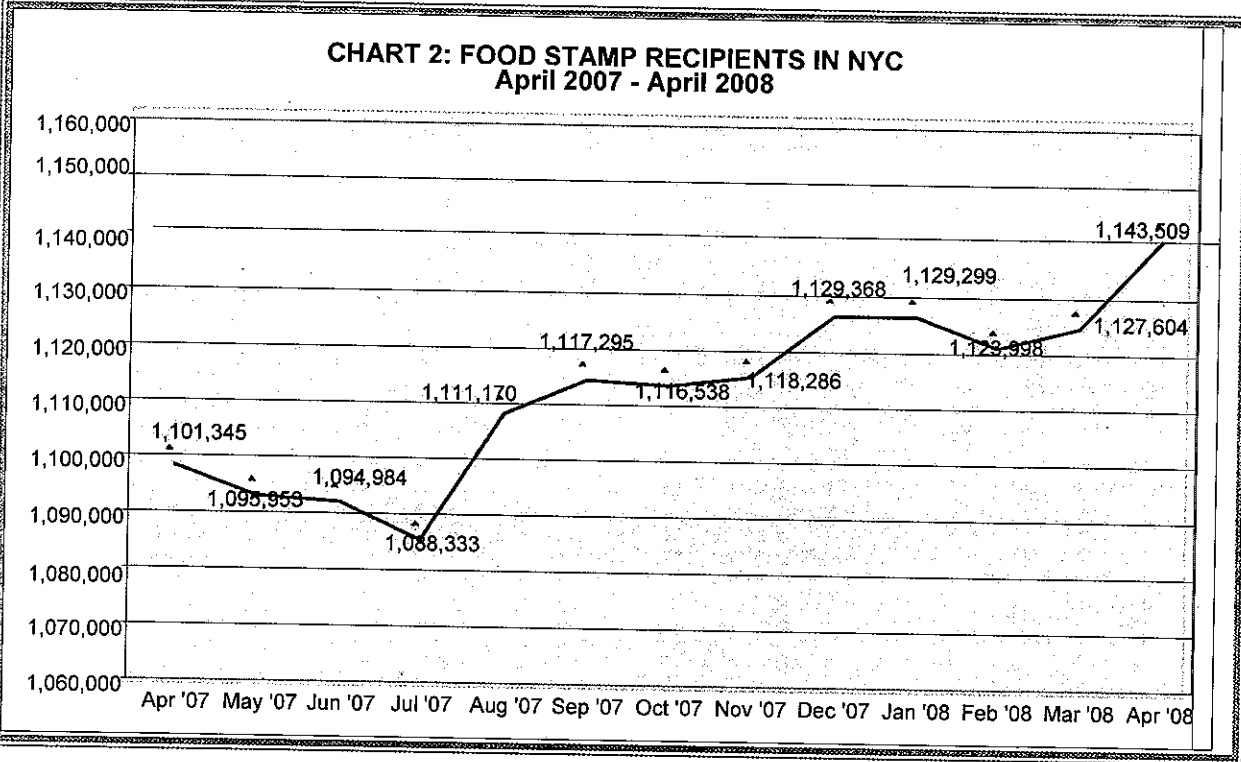
The following charts were presented at the hearing:

Chart One: Cash Assistance Recipients in NYC April 2007 – April 2008

Chart Two: Food Stamp Recipients in NYC April 2007 – April 2008

Chart Three: Medicaid Enrollees in NYC April 2007 – April 2008







Written Testimony of New Destiny Housing Corporation
Before the City Council's General Welfare, Finance and Women's Issues Committees
Executive Budgeting Hearing
May 13, 2008

The recently released executive budget for FY2009 indicates that City plans to increase the capacity of the HRA emergency domestic violence shelter system by 147 beds with the addition of 4 new emergency shelters.

New Destiny Housing Corporation has serious concerns about the expansion of the domestic violence emergency shelter system when transitional and permanent housing are the greater needs.

Currently, less than 20% of DV emergency shelter residents exit shelter with safe, permanent housing and only 10-15% percent are transferred to a DV Tier II shelter. This leaves nearly 70% with no safe place to go at the end of their shelter stays. Approximately 30% of families discharged from DV shelters are given referrals to DHS for lack of other options. Additional transitional shelters would reduce the flow of DV survivors back to unsafe situations and the DHS shelter system.

We are also concerned that adding four more shelters will severely overburden HRA's ODVEIS unit which is already stretched beyond capacity. Staff will be further distracted from the implementation of the four promising new City initiatives announced by Mayor Bloomberg in October 2007 designed to improve the access of shelter residents to safe, permanent housing.

The increased funding identified in the executive budget for ODVEIS could better be used to:

- Expand the transitional shelter system. The addition of transitional shelter units would reduce the number of families exiting shelter with no safe place to go by giving families the time and services they need to successfully transition to safe, permanent housing and
- Add staff to HRA's ODV so it can more effectively implement the new housing initiatives thus expediting shelter residents' moves to permanent housing.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

City Council Executive Budget Hearing
New York City Administration for Children's Services
Testimony by Commissioner John B. Mattingly
May 13, 2008

Good afternoon Chair Weprin, Chair de Blasio, Chair Sears and members of the Finance, General Welfare and Women's Issues committees. I am John B. Mattingly, Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services. Joining me today is Susan Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services. Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the Executive Budget and update you on our ongoing efforts to provide high-quality services to New York City's children and families in the areas of child protection, child abuse and neglect prevention, foster care services, and subsidized child care and Head Start.

As we all know, New York City is struggling with difficult economic times along with the rest of the state and country. As a result, all City agencies have had to make reductions in their budgets for Fiscal Year 2009 and we have been faced with some difficult decisions in how to produce savings. At Children's Services, we have worked very hard to make sure that the decisions we have made have as little impact as possible on the programs directly responsible for the safety of children. We also are working hard to make better use of our system's resources and ensure that we have the resources needed to continue our strategic efforts to enhance the Child Welfare and Child Care systems. I would like to update you on some of the initiatives that Children's Services has testified before the City Council about over the past year.

Frontline Recruitment and Retention

In March 2006, Children's Services released its action plan to strengthen child protective services in New York City, called *Safeguarding Our Children*. Integral to this plan are a number of efforts to build upon the workforce of professionals conducting investigations of child abuse and neglect. We have been able to hire and train new frontline workers on a continuous basis, helping us to succeed in maintaining a workforce of close to 1200 frontline investigators and an average monthly caseload of 12 cases per worker. We have also increased the supports available to our child protective staff including bringing on new investigative consultants with law enforcement expertise to help with investigative practice and additional Family Service staff to carry court ordered supervision cases after the investigation has been completed for the duration of the court case. We have continued to hire Family Court attorneys and have launched a pilot for Child Safety Conferences in the Manhattan Field Office, which we believe is helping to reduce the number of court filings.

As we shared at the preliminary budget hearing and I hope you have seen in our ads featured in subway cars and newspapers throughout the city, Children's Services has initiated a recruitment campaign to attract Child Protective Specialists (CPS) and reduce turnover. The ads feature actual child protective staff and promote the opportunities and challenges of becoming a child protective specialist through taglines, such as, "Are you tough enough to be a child protective specialist." Through this campaign we hope to raise awareness about this critical role and to attract applicants who would meet the qualifications that we are looking for to identify new staff who understand the rewards and challenges of this work and who will be committed to a career serving children and families.

The advertisements are just one part of this effort. In order to make it easier to apply for a CPS position, we have initiated an online application process, which is available on our web site at www.nyc.gov/acs. Prospective applicants can now access up-to-date information about the availability of CPS job opportunities, and videos featuring current staff to clearly illustrate the responsibilities of this work. We have also instituted an online application process and automated screening system to enhance accessibility for applicants and help us to better track and manage applications. This has streamlined our screening process, helping us to increase the number of applicants and progress applications more quickly. In addition, we are revising the interview process to focus on the qualities that are needed to succeed in this job. Using feedback from outstanding CPS field staff, we have developed a set of skills to help us identify the high quality and commitment that we are looking for in our workforce.

We are also working to better support our experienced staff in child protection and to develop opportunities for professional and personal development. We have targeted managers and deputy directors in all of our borough child protective offices for the new Leadership Academy for Child Safety. These middle managers are responsible for overseeing the work of our 3,800 caseworkers who investigate more than 55,000 reports of child abuse and neglect each year. We have targeted these managers because they are the team leaders in our child protective investigative units and we believe that supporting them in developing their ability to manage will translate into better support for frontline staff and better practice for children and families.

The first class of 30 managers and deputy directors graduated in December 2007 and we currently have a second class underway consisting of 29 deputy directors.

The Leadership Academy promotes skill building in managing quality safety practice, managing in times of change, using data to manage as we have instituted through ChildStat and managing in the middle of a hierarchy. Classes emphasize the role of middle managers in modeling and teaching quality practice and provide opportunities for managers to reflect on themselves and their management styles in a safe environment.

Community Partnerships

Since Children's Services was established in 1996, the agency has been working to strengthen our work in communities to engage families, local organizations and government agencies in our efforts to keep children safe and ensure their well-being. From my experience throughout the country, I know – and as community leaders you all know – that this work of protecting children and strengthening families is most effective when parents and communities share this enormous responsibility.

Over the past two years, we have rolled out the Community Partnership Initiative in 11 high need communities throughout the City: Bedford Stuyvesant, Jamaica, Highbridge, Lower East Side, East Harlem, Bushwick, Soundview, Mott Haven, Stapleton, East New York and Elmhurst. Under the leadership of Anne Williams-Isom, who currently serves as Deputy Commissioner for Community and Government Affairs, we have developed an office of 21 full time staff who are working to build coalitions in these communities and provide technical assistance to support communities in developing strategies to meet these four critical child welfare objectives:

- Recruiting foster parents;
- Hosting family visiting in locations in the community;

- Engaging families, advocates and other key resources in Family Team Conferences; and
- Connecting families with Child Care and Head Start

There is a lot of good work that is underway in our community coalitions. I would like to highlight one of the many examples. As the Council is aware, placing children in communities is one of our primary objectives whenever a child comes into foster care so that we can minimize trauma by maintaining the child's relationships in that community, including school, child care, services, etc. A local church, Greater Allen AME, has worked as part of the coalition in Jamaica, along with the local YMCA, a Queens based foster care agency and Children's Services to develop recruitment tools to attract foster parents in their community. These tools include a two-minute video that aired at every service at the church for two months in 2007, and promotional items including fans, door hangers and postcards, which have been distributed to church members, families living in Jamaica and the community at large. AME's Foster Care Ministry also presented to over 100 ministries in an effort to recruit prospective foster parents and has developed supports for local foster parents with the community's *Circle of Support*, an ACS program designed to enhance access and support for foster, kinship and adoptive parents in local communities through regular meetings and activities. Thus far, the Jamaica CPI has recruited 64 prospective foster parents and trained 17 new foster parents. The CPI will host a new class to begin this month to continue bringing new foster parents into this community.

Project Full Enrollment

As you know from our testimony in April of this year, Children's Services has made a top priority of ensuring that our scarce child care resources are used

efficiently to provide as many eligible children as possible with these critical services. I am pleased to report that we are receiving very positive feedback from the Task Force on Project Full Enrollment, and that the provider agencies and advocates participating in the related workgroups are giving us critical guidance in developing concrete recommendations for this initiative.

Children's Services and our workgroup members are mindful of the need for predictability and stability while transitioning from a line-item reimbursement system to a rate-based payment system. The workgroup has recommended several protections to facilitate the transition to the new reimbursement system and to allow for predictable cashflow. The recommended protections include absence policies that will allow sponsors to be paid at up to 100 % with allowable absences and a quarterly payment system that will be based upon a prior period's actual utilization and allow for fluctuations in a program's enrollment. During the implementation phase, sponsor agencies will be paid on a rate regardless of enrollment. In other words, sponsors will be reimbursed as if the program was operating at 100% enrollment for a period of time.

Finally, the Technical Assistance workgroup is developing a menu of topics and options to give provider agencies the knowledge of how to succeed in this new system. Topics include: how to use the new Internet-based enrollment and attendance system to simplify and speed up enrollment; how to identify and reach out to new eligible families coming into and living in the neighborhoods; how to manage cash flow and predict and manage for changes in enrollment; how to set private-pay rates; and how to make programmatic changes to accommodate younger children.

All of these topics require developing new skills and awareness among program leadership. Children's Services will also provide core technical assistance, such as the training required to use the Internet-based enrollment system and to use the new payment and budgeting procedures. The \$2 million budgeted for technical assistance will support the skills and knowledge development, the "how to's" of running programs. We know additional resources may be needed for some programs. For example, programs may choose recruitment strategies that need additional materials customized for their neighborhoods and need enhanced materials, and we are working with partners in the child care community to find those resources. The Council might consider partnership in this effort to develop the "What's", the resources to produce signs and materials that will help programs recruit and retain new stakeholders.

One very important recommendation from this group has been that we identify external technical assistance providers to supplement the technical assistance that we have already been providing to agencies through the first phase of our enrollment work. We are working as we speak to develop a broad continuum of technical assistance providers with proven experience in all the areas I mentioned.

We expect that over the next month each of the workgroups will continue development of these recommendations, which will be incorporated into the implementation plan. By the end of May, the implementation strategy will be presented to the Task Force so that we can move forward with Project Full Enrollment. The Task Force will have the opportunity to provide Children's Services with feedback on the plan before we begin engaging the broader stakeholder community.

Later this month, we will also release our Community Needs Assessment report and hold forums with sponsoring boards and program directors to discuss the Community Needs Assessment and the Task Force's progress in developing the structure and implementation plans for Project Full Enrollment. I want to remind City Councilmembers that we are currently reaching out to schedule meetings to discuss the significance of our Community Needs Assessment report as a community planning tool for early care and education and Project Full Enrollment.

Improved Outcomes for Children

As you know, Improved Outcomes for Children was launched in the Fall of 2007 with nine participating foster care and five preventive agencies. Our goal for this effort is to strengthen Children's Services' ability to bring about improved outcomes for children throughout the child welfare system.

We seek to do this by:

- The adoption of a family team conference model for key decisions;
- Enhanced performance measurement and monitoring of provider agencies that emphasizes quality practice;
- The clarification of lines of accountability through delegation of case management functions to provider agencies;
- Targeted technical assistance to our provider agencies.

Family Team Conferences for children and families in foster care, which are supported by the Division of Family Permanency, have been occurring since September 2007. Family Team Conferences for families receiving preventive services, which are managed by the Division of Family Support Services, began in

October. More than 2,300 Family Team Conferences were held through February 2008. We have been receiving very positive feedback from providers and families, most of whom say that the family team conference model is extremely valuable. One provider mentioned that it has been a positive experience to work as a team with other providers and with Children's Services. Providers have found Children's Services staff to be helpful and supportive. Another said, "From day one, the providers have expressed confidence in this partnership."

The implementation of Improved Outcomes for Children means that family foster care programs are able to focus investments on improving placement stability and permanency. The results from the first 6 months in participating agencies have been promising:

- Among Improved Outcomes for Children agencies, step-ups to a more restrictive placement declined considerably. In FY 2007, 129 children experienced a move to a more restrictive setting and in FY 2008 so far only 38 children experienced a step up. If this trend continues, there would be an approximate 50 percent reduction in FY 2008 over the past 2 years.
- Reunification rates have also improved to 19 percent in the first six months of FY 2008, up from 13 percent in FY 2007.
- Performance around adoptions is encouraging. In FY 2006 and FY 2007, the adoption rates were 11 percent and 10 percent respectively. Based on the first 6 months of FY 2008, agencies are on track to achieve a 12 percent adoption rate.

Another important aspect of Improved Outcomes for Children is the enhanced performance measurement and monitoring across the system, not just to providers that are participating in the first phase. The Divisions of Quality Assurance and

Policy and Planning are in charge of this process -- mainly the Offices of Research and Evaluation (ORE) and Agency Program Assistance (APA). These two divisions have already introduced the new Scorecard for preventive and foster care agencies, safety reviews at all participating Improved Outcomes for Children agencies, and learning visits at all agencies. APA will support all participating agencies to manage performance and develop improvement strategies using data.

A survey of agencies conducted by APA reflects significant progress towards what we set out to achieve in the first five months of Phase I of Improved Outcomes for Children. Providers generally believe that our process is professional and collegial, and that our staff is responsive and knowledgeable of best practices and important policies. Also key to the success of Improved Outcomes for Children has been the technical assistance, guidance and training provided by Children's Services staff.

A comprehensive review of the first few months of Improved Outcomes for Children conducted by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, a research center studying policies and programs affecting children and families, reaches several positive conclusions, among them:

- Children's Services staff and provider agencies are committed to making fundamental changes in the child welfare system;
- The Family Team Conferencing model is promoting enhanced engagement of parents and the process has led to the development of more action-oriented service plans;
- Provider agencies have more control over the casework process than they have ever had historically and staff are enjoying the benefits of the new level of control;

- Children's Services and provider agency staff are working with each other more closely and building strong relationships.

As we described last year, Children's Services is planning with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for a system-wide expansion of Improved Outcomes for Children in the Fall of 2008. Our success so far – primarily due to hard work on the part of Children's Services staff and with the support of the agencies involved – makes us hopeful that we can maintain the schedule we announced in 2007.

Conclusion

As you can see, Children's Services has a wide array of initiatives underway to enhance our work. I hope that it is apparent from my testimony that sustaining and developing quality services in line with our mission to protect children, strengthen families and provide quality child care and Head Start opportunities to eligible children in New York City is our top priority. I would like to thank the Committees for providing us with the opportunity to discuss this important work. We will now take your questions.



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**New York City Council
Executive Budget Hearing - General Welfare**

May 13, 2008

**Testimony Respectfully Submitted by,
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646-827-2270**

Good afternoon. My name is Christy Parque and I am the Executive Director of the Homeless Services United. HSU is a coalition of sixty non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk children and adults throughout the five boroughs. I want to thank Chairman DeBlasio and all of the City Council members present here today for this opportunity to testify on our hopes for and concerns about New York City's budget for FY09.

Restore funding for short term rental assistance programs for single adults

This program provides a small cash rental assistance to homeless, single adults that enables them leave the shelter and become stably housed, thus preventing re-entry into the shelter system. This small program provides an important safety measure for single homeless adults otherwise not eligible for rental cash assistance. Currently single adults who enter the shelter system are not eligible for the new cash rental assistance Advantage programs, unless under very specific circumstances. As you have done in the past, we ask that the Council restore this important funding supporting single adult to move from shelter back into the community.

Restore funding to Drop Ins

In FY07 drop-in centers helped over 20,000 New Yorkers who walked in their door. Some received clean clothes and a shower while other received intensive case management services that led to nearly 1000 long term housing placements and over 1500 short term placements. These centers serve as just one door to enter New York City's comprehensive plan to serve homeless individuals. While we recognize the need to diversify the programs that serve the chronically homeless with programs like Safe Havens, there are many homeless New Yorkers that do not meet the entry criteria of Safe Havens or choose to never enter the shelter system. We **must** preserve drop-ins as an available resource for assistance to this population.

The 500 Safe Havens beds scheduled to become available will not be able to replace the demand of drop-ins. In FY07 New York City drop-in centers served on average some 1500 homeless people daily. While the Safe Haven program is in the process of

expanding and proving its efficacy it is important to maintain the proven system of drop-in centers to address the needs of the street homeless.

Restore funding to decentralize 30th Street Men's Intake

Having a centrally located intake center provides an easily accessible entry into the shelter system that enables a homeless individual to take the first steps towards becoming stably housed. The 2004 plan to decentralize the intake system into three centers from the one center in Manhattan, where nearly 60% of the NYC street homeless reside, was a pro-active and strategic policy that would have continued to expand the system of homeless services to be as diverse as the population it serves. Restoring funding to decentralize the men's intake center would ensure equal and easy access to the shelter system and should be a tenant of New York City's innovative homeless services system.

Ensure reinvestment of resources saved through shelter census reductions into systemic solutions for homelessness.

The expected decline in the single adult shelter population will reduce costs by 2.5 million in FY08 and \$3.2 million in FY09. Additional closures of shelters, not unlike the closure of Camp LaGuardia and the sale of the property, will yield real savings that should be committed to investing in programs that prevent homelessness and support people from returning to the shelter system.

We ask for the City Council's support for efforts to ensure long-term accountability and transparency for the shelter resource reinvestment commitment Mayor Bloomberg made in 2004.

Ensure regular Cost of Living Adjustments on Human Services Contracts.

On behalf of our member agencies and their staff who will be receiving the 3% COLA in FY09 we want to thank the Mayor, the Deputy Mayors, the City Council and your staff for your support in recognizing the hard work of my members to make sure that those serving our City's poor, homeless, and at-risk residents receive the regular cost of living adjustments. We look forward to working with our government partners in identifying cost savings that will enable human service workers to receive regular COLAs

Our members and their staff provide important and vital services to New York. Stagnant government support and rising business costs make it increasingly difficult for social service agencies to recruit and retain staff, many of whom are formerly homeless or one paycheck away from being homeless. High turnover rates due to low wages and infrequent wage increases impede the quality of service delivery and create instability in communities and families. Regular COLAs are just one way to ensure that we keep our committed and compassionate staff working to assist some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Adjust government budget allocations for inflation regularly.

The City budget process has no formal mechanism to adjust spending to meet the deflating spending power over time. Personnel services (PS) and Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS) continue to rise without any corresponding increase in the amount of money allocated for the program in the budget. Many of our members have not seen an increase in some of their contracts in 13 years. We are calling for a process by which overhead and OTPS costs are regularly adjusted for inflation.

Increasingly, our members' City contracts do not sufficiently cover the basic operating expenses of an effective program. This reality has led to a disturbing trend in which New York City's non-profits are subsidizing core city services through private fundraising. Private dollars, which have historically been used to enhance core services for clients and to develop new and innovative service models, are now being used to support the base cost.

I thank you for your time and commitment to addressing the needs and concerns of homeless and at risk New Yorkers and those who serve them. Homeless Services United looks forward to working with you to realize solutions that will allow our members' vital programs to continue to provide our neediest neighbors with services that support and motivate them to thrive in the future.



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

May 9, 2008

Honorable Christine Quinn
Speaker of the City Council
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Re: Urgency of Child Welfare Funding Restorations

Dear Speaker Quinn:


Within our 30-year history in the provision of preventive, supportive services for families and children, we have seen a steady burgeoning of administrative requirements of the state and city including the complex "Connections" computerization system, the city's "PROMIS" system, decidedly heavier recording and accountability measures, and more recently, very time-consuming tasks involved in the ACS Improved Outcomes for Children project. We are a Phase I program member in the latter. All of this also involves on-site meetings of ACS staff with our staff and supervisors.

Because of the major inroads these have on worker time for direct, greatly needed services to client families, there was a judicious response of the City Council to a caseload of 12 families per caseworker, while yet no adjustment was made for the enlarged supervisory load. Yet somehow even the few steps the City Council and ACS took are now in great jeopardy because of omissions in the Mayor's current budget.

You and the City Council have by now received the explanation for the \$6.5 million urgently needed to restore the basic, fundamental capability of preventive programs to carry out city and state compliance requirements and fulfill essential safety and wellbeing requirements of families and children. All the city's major advocacy and child welfare policy organizations have joined in asking for these restorations. We count on you, in your own commitment to very vulnerable families and children, to lead this action.

With appreciation,


Julia Jean-Francois, LCSW
Co-Director


Sister Mary Paul Janchill, LCSW
Associate for Program

Julie Stein Brockway
Co-Director

Julia Jean-François
Co-Director

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Anne Sherman

Edward W. Stack

James P. Stuckey



TESTIMONY
OF
STEPHANIE GENDELL
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFIARS
AND
SUSAN WIELER
SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE FOR ASSET BUILDING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
FOR
CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK, INC.

BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY FINANCE, GENERAL WELFARE AND WOMEN'S COMMITTEES

REGARDING THE
NEW YORK CITY EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS
FISCAL YEAR 2009

May 13, 2008

Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Public Affairs at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC). I am joined today by Susan Wieler, the Senior Policy Associate for Asset Building and Community Development. I would like to thank Chairs Weprin, de Blasio and Sears and all members of the New York City Council Finance, General Welfare and Women's Issues Committees for this opportunity to testify on New York City's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2009.

For 64 years, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) has convened, informed and mobilized New Yorkers to make New York City a better place for children. CCC's approach to child advocacy is fact-based and combines the best features of public policy advocacy with a tradition of citizen activism.

The CFY'09 Executive Budget takes steps to prepare New York City for a mounting economic downturn. And to be sure, the mortgage crisis, massive state debt, the recently enacted State Budget cuts, and rising unemployment taken together will spell hard times for many families. Economic crises, even short lived ones, impact poor and working class families especially hard. For that reason, even in challenging economic times, it is imperative for the well-being of our city that we hold harmless programs that serve low-income children and their families -- particularly those that keep children healthy, housed, educated and safe.

Upon careful review of the Mayor's Proposals for Fiscal Year 2009, it is clear that great efforts have been made to identify gap closing actions that result in much needed savings by making agencies operate more efficiently. To ensure a balanced budget in CFY'09, the \$59.1 billion budget includes \$1.3 billion in gap closing actions. Notably, the CFY09 Executive Budget also proposes using \$1.6 billion in unanticipated revenue, secured between January and May 2008, to offset out-year gaps in 2010 and 2011.

The Executive Budget includes new funding for several initiatives of importance to children and families including: nearly \$21 million in City Tax Levy for ACS, DOHMH, and HRA to help offset the across the board 2% state cuts to children's services; \$2.3 million to enhance child protective investigations through the use of law enforcement personnel and CASACs, and \$1.3 million for the Collaborative Family Initiative in the Department of Juvenile Justice. In addition, \$25 million is included in the CFY'09 Executive Budget to support a 3-year COLA for employees at not-for-profit agencies that contract with ACS, DFTA, DHS, DYCD and HRA – which will provide salary increases for approximately 36,000 employees at 1,000 social service agencies throughout the five boroughs. CCC applauds the Mayor for taking these steps.

Unfortunately, while significant effort has been made to avoid direct service reductions and to address several new needs of importance, the CFY'09 Executive Budget does in fact cut nearly **\$150 million** in funds supporting essential child and family serving programs including: eliminating 5,600 slots from the Summer Youth Employment Program, eliminating 1,000 slots from preventive service programs and failing to fund preventive services caseload reductions; eliminating funding for 6 child health clinics, the asthma initiative, children's mental health services, and adolescent substance abuse treatment; cutting eviction prevention services and funding for emergency food programs, among other programs. (Please see attached chart for details related to these cuts.) As funding for these many of these programs has been restored year after year by the City Council, the services that programs provide have become an essential part of the fabric of the city's 59 communities. At a time when New York City families are facing heightened economic uncertainty in the labor market, housing instability, and increased costs for many basic essentials such as food and fuel, the proposed cuts, should they stand, will have a deleterious effect on the well-being of New York City's 2 million children.

Turning to the budget impact on the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the CFY'09 Executive Budget

includes a number of cuts that will significantly hamper the city's ability to meet the needs of New York City's most at-risk children and families.

Preventive Services:

Over the past two years, ACS, the Mayor's Office and the City Council have all taken steps to dedicate resources to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and families, and to provide support services to keep children safely in their homes. The Executive Budget for CFY'09 fails to provide the funding for the 1000 additional preventive service slots that the CFY 2008 Adopted Budget had added, fails to fund \$9 million (\$3.2 CTL) of preventive service enhancement funding, and once again fails to fund the Child Safety Initiative that lowers caseloads at general preventive programs from 15 to 1 to 12 to 1.

While difficult budget times require agency efficiencies and budget cuts, child safety must never be jeopardized, as sadly this City already knows what can happen when child welfare services are not properly funded. The City's preventive service programs are dedicated to strengthening and supporting families so that children can remain safely in their homes and not be placed in foster care (which incidentally is also much more costly.) Uncertainty from one year to the next with regard to caseworker caseload ratios and numbers of preventive slots translates into uncertainty with regard to staffing levels at these critical programs.

Furthermore, ACS's *Improved Outcomes for Children* (IOC) plan requires preventive service programs to take on additional responsibilities such as family team conferences and case management tasks, without additional resources. Preventive service programs will need 12 to 1 caseload ratios to be able to implement IOC.

In addition, CCC supports expanding the Child Safety Caseload Reduction Initiative to all general preventive service programs (including the 1000 slots in jeopardy), to maintain supervisory caseloads of 5 to 1, and to account for the State's 2% cut. This would require a total of \$6.5 million City Tax Levy.

That said, CCC understands that there are limited resources and at a minimum asks that the City Council and the Mayor adopt a budget that restores the \$4.2 million Child Safety Initiative (reducing general preventive caseloads from 15 to 1 to 12 to 1) with an additional \$156,000 to account for the State 2% Budget cut, thus enabling this initiative to still gross the necessary \$12 million.

In sum, CCC urges the City Council and the Mayor to adopt a budget that includes the 1000 additional slots that are now serving families in need of services, restores the \$4.2 million for the caseload reduction initiative, and adds at least \$156,000 to account for the State reimbursement change.

Foster Care and Adoption:

The Executive Budget proposes an \$875,000 reduction to foster parent and adoption recruitment efforts. CCC urges the Mayor's Office, ACS and the City Council to adopt a Budget that ensures ACS and its foster care agencies are able to recruit enough quality foster and adoptive parents, so that children do not have to spend nights sleeping at the Children's Center awaiting a foster care placement. In addition, the Executive Budget proposes to eliminate ACS Direct Care staff and reduces agency headcount. CCC cautions the City against cuts that will impact ACS's ability to maintain manageable caseloads and implement critical initiatives such as *Improved Outcomes for Children* and *Preparing Youth for Adulthood*.

Child Care:

CCC supports the goals of ACS's Full Enrollment Initiative. If implemented properly, the proposal to pay child care centers based on enrollment has the potential to serve up to 3,000 additional children who will fill the vacant seats. ACS's child care programs are a critical partner to providing quality child care so that parents can work. For this initiative to be successful, the ACS child care centers must receive effective technical assistance on how to manage budgets, recruit and enroll children, set fee scales, and serve mixed income families. Until we have a better sense of who will be providing this technical assistance and in what format, it is impossible for us to know whether the proposed \$2 million will be

sufficient to meet the need for effective technical assistance that ensures child care centers can remain viable and as many low income children as possible will receive subsidized child care in New York City.

In addition, CCC feels that there needs to be additional resources available to child care programs that need concrete goods such as cribs, sprinklers, changing tables, sinks, etc. to convert classrooms to serve infants and toddlers.

Homelessness:

With regard to homelessness, CCC is particularly concerned about the Executive Budget's failure to \$3 million in anti-eviction legal services, emergency grants to families at risk of eviction and the \$500,000 for the Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund. This is of critical importance given that the Executive Budget adds \$21.4 million CTL (\$49 million gross) to expand family shelter capacity to meet the increased numbers of family needing shelter. Thus, restoration of initiatives that help prevent homelessness is especially critical.

Family Support/HRA:

Access to healthy and affordable food is critical to families. CCC is especially concerned that the CFY'09 Executive Budget fails to fund \$1.5 million for emergency food programs or maintain the \$295,500 needed to support food stamp use at Farmers' Markets.

In closing, CCC urges the City Council to negotiate a budget with the Mayor that protects, restores and enhances the services children and families in New York City rely on. During difficult budget times, it is more important than ever to take steps to ensure every New York City child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

The chart below only highlights CFY' 09 proposals that impact vital services for children.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Child Welfare Preventive Services Caseload Reduction Initiative			\$4.2 million
CONNECT Domestic Violence program			\$1.2 million
Child Care Supplies- Provider's Choice			\$1.7 million
Working Parents for a Working New York			\$875,000
Low Income Investment Fund (LIFF)			\$200,000
Increase Preventive Service Slots (1000 families)		\$2.4 million	
Preventive Services Enhancement		\$3.15 million	
Child Protective Services Productivity		\$2.8 million	
Reduction in Foster Care and Adoptive Recruitment		\$875,000	
Eliminate Direct Congregate Care and Foster Care Support		\$2.31 million	
Agency-wide Headcount Reduction		\$1.23 million	
Improve Child Protective Investigations	\$2.3 million		
Adoption Subsidies	\$1.4 million		
City funds to address state budget reduction to foster care, JD-PINS, institutional schools, preventive services and adoption subsidies	\$7.9 million		
Sub-Total	\$11.6 million	\$12.77 million	\$8.18 million

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Universal Pre-kindergarten (full day in ACS programs)			\$5.0 million
New Century High Schools			\$500,000
Teacher's Choice			\$20.9 million
Dropout Prevention and Intervention			\$4.2 million
Urban Advantage			\$2.5 million
New Visions for Public Schools			\$500,000
School Safety	\$10 million		
Special Ed Pre K	\$10 million		
Charter Schools	\$36 million		
Sub-Total	\$56 million		\$33.6 million

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Obesity Prevention			\$3.1 million
Podiatric Screening			\$1 million
Mental Health Treatment for Children Under Five			\$1.65 million
Autism Awareness Initiative			\$1.5 million
Dental Vans			\$268,000
Infant Mortality Initiative			\$4.8 million
Asthma Control Initiative			\$545,000
Summer School Nurses			\$1.9 million
SPARKS and Health Corps			\$660,000
HIV/AIDS Contract Reductions		\$839,000	
Reductions in Emergency Contraception Services		192,000	
Immunization Efficiencies and Service Reductions		\$268,000	
Riverside Health Center	\$192,000		
Harlem Asthma Initiative	\$197,000		
Additional Food Safety Resources	\$553,000		
City funds to address state budget reduction to public health services	\$5.6 million		
Sub-Total	\$6.54 million	\$1.3 million	\$15 million

HEALTH AND HOSPITALS CORPORATION

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Child Health Clinics			\$6 million
HHC Outpatient Pharmacies and Clinics			\$2.4 million
Translation Services			\$1 million
Adolescent Substance Abuse Outpatient Treatment Clinics			\$1.6 million
Sub-Total			\$11 million

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund			\$500,000
Family Shelter Capacity Increase	\$21.4 million		
Sub-Total	\$21.4 million		\$500,000

HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
City-Task Force on Housing Court			\$550,000
Anti-Eviction Legal Services			\$3 million
Community Based Consultants			\$1.03 million
Sub-Total			\$4.58 million

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Program Services for Youth in Facilities			\$1.3 million
Collaborative Family Initiative	\$1.3 million		
Workforce/Life Skills Program	\$139,000		
Sub-Total	\$1.4 million		\$1.3 million

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative
UI/SSI Legal Assistance			\$2.5 million
Emergency Food Programs			\$1.5 million
City funds to address state budget reduction to child support enforcement	\$235,000		
Sub-Total	\$235,000		\$4 million

DEPARTMENT FOR YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
Helping Involve Parents in Schools Project (HIP)			\$4.3 million
Cultural After School Adventure (CASA)			\$8.4 million
Runaway and Homeless Youth			\$4.7 million
Institute for Student Achievement			\$1.35 million
Beacons		\$2.3 million	\$4 million
Eliminate Bus Program		\$200,000	
Street Outreach/Neighborhood Youth Alliance			\$2.1 million
The After-Three Program			\$3.8 million
Miscellaneous Youth Programs			\$4.1 million
Virtual Ys			\$900,000
Sports and Arts Foundation			\$2.1 million
Summer Youth Employment Program Reduction		\$8 million	
Out-of-School Time		\$2.64 million	
Sub-Total		\$13.14 million	\$35.75 million

MISCELLANEOUS

PROGRAM	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
EITC Legal Assistance			\$765,000
Legal Services for Working Poor			\$1.8 million
Civil Legal Services			\$3.7 million
MFY Legal Services			\$200,000
Expand food stamp use at Farmers' Markets			\$295,500
Legal Services for NYC (LSNY)			\$500,000
Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)			\$500,000
Sub-Total			\$7.77 million

TOTALS

PROGAM	Proposed Expenditure Increase*	Proposed Expenditure Decrease**	Failure to Fund City Council Initiative***
ALL CHILDREN'S SERVICES	\$97.18 million	\$27.21 million	\$122.1 million

* - Increases included by the Mayor in proposed budget for CFY09.

** - Decreases included by the Mayor in proposed budget for CFY09.

*** - Allocations made at adoption for CFY08 that have not been carried forward by the Mayor in the proposed budget for CFY09.

Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies



**TESTIMONY OF JAMES F. PURCELL
CEO
COUNCIL OF FAMILY & CHILD CARING AGENCIES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL GENERAL WELFARE COMMITTEE
MAY 13, 2008**

Good afternoon, I am James F. Purcell, the CEO of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA). COFCCA is the primary statewide membership organization for child welfare services providers, representing 110 not-for-profit agencies that contract with the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the county departments of social services to provide foster care, preventive services, adoption, and aftercare services as well as education for children on our facility campuses. Our member agencies provide foster care to over 99% of the City's children in foster care and preventive services to well over 85% of the families served by NYC.

On behalf of the vulnerable children and families served by these agencies, I express our deepest gratitude to Chair Bill de Blasio for your leadership on all issues affecting the safety and well-being of the children of this city—especially your championship of the Child Safety Initiative that has made an enormous impact on the lives of New York City's at-risk children for the past two years by lowering caseloads in preventive services to 1:12. Since the enactment of the Child Safety Initiative, COFCCA has worked with our colleagues to urge Mayor Bloomberg to baseline this funding so that children in high risk families could continue to benefit from the enhanced attention provided by caseworkers under the reduced caseloads.

Very sadly, once again the Mayor's Executive Budget does not include funding for the Child Safety Initiative, even though his Administration for Children's Services is depending on the 1:12 caseloads funded by it to implement the ACS plan of Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC).

As ACS moves to a family-centered and community-based model with its RFP for the child welfare system, the Child Safety Initiative is essential to ensuring that preventive agencies are equipped to handle the added responsibilities that come with system-wide change. For example, although agencies support the new Family Team Conferencing model, which brings all of the family, their supporters, and ACS and agency workers together at the table to ensure the safety of the children and that their best interests are served, caseworkers cannot successfully accommodate their new conference-related responsibilities without reasonable caseloads.

After meetings with child welfare experts commissioned by ACS to prepare reports on the new IOC program, one preliminary evaluation concludes:

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“The new requirements around family-team conferencing have proven to be a serious challenge for provider agency staff. The logistical work that goes into setting up family-team conferences—making diligent efforts to secure the participation of various stakeholders; coordinating, when necessary, with the ACS office of family-team conference; identifying appropriate space; engaging community partners not necessarily accustomed to working with foster care or preventive services agencies in this way—can be extraordinary. “

According to one of the five preventive services programs involved in IOC, “IOC wouldn’t be possible without the 1-12 caseload ratio!” All of the agencies participating in the pilot of this exciting initiative agree with that assessment.

We have heard repeatedly from caseworkers at preventive services programs throughout the city about the vital difference that reduced caseloads makes in their work with highly troubled families. Thanks to the lowered caseloads caseworkers can:

- Spend more time visiting and intervening in high risk situations,
- Keep up with the documentation of cases that is so important for reviewing and analyzing progress,
- Engage families sooner to develop plans for addressing the problems that compromise the safety of their children,
- Better collaborate with other service providers, so that families are less likely to “fall through the cracks” of different service providers,
- Advocate and better translate for non-English speaking families.

But most important of all, caseworkers are not burning out at previous rates-- which means that they are able to identify and respond to the needs of the extremely vulnerable children whose very lives often depend on them.

Preventive services programs are largely responsible for the historic decrease in the numbers of children going into foster care. In the past ten years, the number of children in foster care has declined by more than 50%, to less than 17, 000, and the number of children whose families receive prevent services—39,000, is now twice that of the number in foster care. ACS has relied heavily on the preventive services system to shift the responsibility of protecting children who would otherwise be removed from their homes.

In addition to the caseload reduction to 1-12, preventive programs have been greatly supported by \$9M in flexible funding from ACS, known as the Enhancement funding. Preventive Programs have been using these funds to expand their abilities to help the deeply troubled families with whom they work. The funding is used to remedy problems that put children at risk and expedite closing cases. Programs report the use of all these funds, which have been used to hire case aides, pay for therapists, create new support

groups for families, internships for teens, purchase house-hold goods for formerly homeless families, buy school supplies, tutoring services, and expand staff training.

But the \$9M in Enhancement Funding is not in the Executive Budget. Without that funding, progress with multi-problem families will be lost and child safety compromised in many cases. The Executive Budget also doesn't include funding for the 1,000 new slots in Preventive Services added last year by ACS to serve the increasing numbers of at-risk children for whom there was no room in the fully utilized and over-stressed Preventive Services system. Preventive services programs have been operating at 100% or higher capacity for the past few years. In recognition of the severe strain on the system that protects New York City's most at-risk children, Mayor Bloomberg added 1,000 slots new slots in high need communities in last year's budget. The addition of these slots allowed more families in need to access essential family support services that enhanced the safety of at-risk children, while addressing the family problems that initially put them in danger. This has been especially helpful in immigrant communities, which face months-long waits for a wide variety of critical services including family counseling, mental health, substance abuse rehabilitation, housing, education, and employment training.

What will happen to these families now?

Preventive services not only saves children and families, preventive services helps New York City save money. The State provides matching funds for every dollar spent on preventive services. Unfortunately, the previous formula that for every 35 cents the City spent on preventive services, the State would match with one dollar, has been diluted by the State by 2% this year. But it is still an advantageous investment for the City. Last year the \$4.2 million invested in preventive caseload reduction leveraged roughly \$8 million in State funding. This year it will cost \$4.356 M to draw down the same amount.

In addition to the savings afforded by the State match, every child that remains safely at home saves the City thousands of dollars in reduced foster care and residential care costs – and it saves children from the pain of separation from their families.

The safety of children remaining in high risk homes requires the most skilled and vigilant casework. In order to maintain the safety of children at risk at home, continue to serve the additional 1,000 families identified by ACS as at high risk, and extend the enhancement services that have helped so many families, we ask the City to restore the Child Safety Initiative and the \$9M in Enhancement funding as well as funding for the 1,000 additional slots added last year.

For the aforementioned reasons, we urge that the City add and baseline funding to the ACS budget for the Child Safety Initiative:

- **\$4.2 million** for general preventive services programs to maintain a 12:1 caseworker to family ratio (which actually means closer to 40 individuals including the children at risk)

- **Add \$156,000** to cover the loss of funds incurred by the State's 2% reduction in its match to provide the same amount of funding used in the past two years to ensure caseloads of 1-12.

- **\$2.3 million** to
 - support caseload reductions in ALL preventive service programs, including those not part of the original Child Safety Initiative, as well as preventive programs that received additional cases as part of the 1,000 new slots added in FY 07-08 AND
 - Ensure supervisory ratios of 5:1 for all general preventive service programs. Supervisors are an integral part of preventive programs given the key role they play in managing, training, and supporting frontline caseworkers. As agencies hire additional caseworkers to reduce ratios, additional supervisors are also necessary.

With a total investment of only **\$6.5 million** in the Child Safety Initiative, over 70 preventive service agencies across all five boroughs will be able to provide enhanced protection for New York City's most vulnerable children.

Thank you.



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and Children's Services, Inc.

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Testimony to New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare
May 13, 2008

Good afternoon, my name is Carmen Collado. I am Director of Public Policy and Government Relations at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (JBFCS).

On behalf of Jewish Board of Family & Children's Service, I'd like to thank Councilmember Bill DiBlasio and the City Council for their leadership in providing for the safety of New York City's Children.

JBFCS preventive services division serves 400 children at any given time from 5 sites in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island. Over 70% of those children come from ACS Child Protective Services. Of the range of advocacy and counseling services our preventive staff provide, assessing the safety of children and victims of domestic violence is a priority throughout our involvement with a family. It's important to note that our home-based services are more comprehensive than "visits" and include a continuous assessment of safety in the home environment. It is critically important that preventive service caseloads be set at 1:12 just as ACS has maintained the cap on child protective caseloads at 12. We urge city council to restore funding to maintain caseloads that will insure the continued safety of New York City's children.

Thank you.

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neighborhood family services coalition

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL WELFARE COMMITTEES

May 13, 2008

Re: The Executive Budget for FY '09- Preventive Services

members

Advocates for Children of
New York
BELL
Brooklyn Bureau of Community
Service
Citizens' Committee for Children
of New York City
Church Avenue Merchants Block
Association (CAMBA)
Community Service Society of
New York
Council of Family and Child Caring
Agencies
Cypress Hills Local Development
Corporation
The Door
Episcopal Social Services
Forest Hills Community House
Goddard-Riverside Community
Center
Good Shepherd Services
Harlem Children's Zone
Harlem RBI
HeartShare Human Services
Isaacs Center
Little Sisters of the Assumption
Family Health Service
New Settlement Apartments
Community Services
New York Foundling Hospital
New York Urban League
Services to Families
SCAN New York
Seamen's Society for Children
and Families
St. Raymond Community Outreach
United Neighborhood Houses

Good Afternoon. I am Gigi Li and I am here to testify on behalf of the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition regarding the Mayor's Executive Budget for fiscal year 2009, as it impacts Preventive Services.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the leadership of Chair de Blasio and the General Welfare Committee on issues relevant to the welfare of the children and families of New York City. Your commitment to the provision of quality preventive services is greatly appreciated. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

The Neighborhood Family Services Coalition (NFSC) is a group of service providers and advocacy organizations that is committed to the delivery of quality services for children, youth and families at the neighborhood level. Our overarching goal is to transform best practice into public policy – focusing in the area of preventive services and also youth programs, youth employment, and increasing community organizations' collaborations with public schools.

Neighborhood Family Services Coalition is also a member of the Preventive Services Action Network (PSAN), a coalition of non-profit advocacy and membership-based organizations dedicated on improving the quality of, and increasing access to neighborhood-based preventive services.

Background:

The Child Safety Initiative added by the New York City Council in FY '08 was particularly crucial in strengthening the ability of preventive service providers to serve at-risk families and keep children safe by reducing the caseloads in general preventive programs to a nationally accepted average of 12 families to 1 caseworker. A smaller caseload allows workers to provide more intensive intervention, making it easier for caseworkers to better protect the children in their care, and is essential for caseworker retention. Unless and until we improve neighborhood services at the ground level, the capacity to reach and stabilize families will remain dangerously limited.

facilitator

Jim Marley

staff director

Michelle Yanche

staff associates

Ashok Kamal

Gigi Li

To that end, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Restore funding for the \$4.2 million CTL to maintain preventive services caseloads at a ratio of 12:1**

Only by maintaining caseloads of 12:1 can caseworkers give the attention necessary to protect children in very troubled families, who previously would have been placed in foster care. Caseworkers must deal with extensive city and state level documentation systems, multifaceted cases that include large family sizes, language differences, and special needs in the areas of education, health, and mental health. Maintaining caseloads of 12:1 is essential for keeping caseworker burnout low and therefore caseworker turnover low.

However, due to state matching funds, in prior fiscal years \$4.2 million grossed \$12 million for this initiative. As a result of the state FY 2008-09 2% Budget Cut, \$4.36 million CTL is needed to keep the program whole.

- **An additional investment of \$2.3 million (total of \$6.5 million CTL) can further benefit the Child Safety Initiative by:**

Maintaining supervisor ratios at 5:1 for all general preventive service programs. As agencies hire additional caseworkers to reduce ratios, additional supervisors are also necessary for managing, training, and assisting caseworkers.

Reducing caseloads from 15:1 to 12:1 in general preventive programs which were previously overlooked in the Child Safety Initiative.

Lastly, ACS' upcoming Child Welfare Services with Community Coalitions RFP proposes to move the child welfare system forward utilizing multiple approaches, including IOC's Family Conferencing Model, a community-based approach through the Community Partnership Initiative, and evidence based practice. The two recommendations outlined above are essential for preventive agencies to provide the level of responsibility that come with system-wide change.

Preventive services constitute a vital component in the network of services designed to strengthen families and invest in the future of our youth. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to work together to ensure that the Adopted Budget makes the investments necessary to ensure that every New York child has access to quality services in their neighborhoods.

On behalf of the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition, I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

May 13, 2008
City Council Hearing
Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget
Testimony by Robert V. Hess

Good Afternoon. My name is Rob Hess and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Joining me at the table are Steve Pock, DHS' Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Procurement Operations and Lula Urquhart, Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Audit.

Today, I will report on the agency's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 09 and provide committee members with details regarding our efforts to care for homeless New Yorkers.

The face of the Department of Homeless Services is changing. We created a new rental subsidy program. We expanded HomeBase services citywide. We listened to the very people on the street who we are working to serve and restructured our street homeless outreach services, ripping down the bureaucratic red tape and bringing the doorway to them, rather than expecting them to find the door to housing. We implemented new shelter models to help families realize the dream of independent living. We continue to strive to do more to assist New York's most vulnerable and move families and individuals from shelter to homes. Our story is one of perseverance and dedication focused on the families and individuals who need us most.

Shelter Census

As our agency focuses resources on innovative programs, we are pleased to report an across-the-board decline in every part of the shelter system. Total shelter population is down ten percent, and there are 4,000 fewer New Yorkers sleeping in shelter each night.

Most remarkably, in the past year, the number of adult families sleeping in shelter on an average night dropped by 14 percent. At the same time, the number of families with children sleeping in shelter decreased by six percent over the past six months.

Broad change is seen since 2004, with the largest decline, to date, in shelter census among single adults. Through hard work and outside-the-box thinking the number of adults living in shelter has been reduced by 21 percent.

These statistics are much more than numbers on paper. They are the progress of this city as we work to extend a hand to those most in need. Sadly, homelessness is a fixture of today's society. But that is not a condition I am willing to accept. Tackling the homeless problem is the first thing I think of when I wake in the morning, and the last thing to cross my mind before I go to sleep at night. We want the best for our residents of New York, and they each deserve a home. It is by working together and realizing the strength in new direction that we can make the most difference. We are encouraged by the numbers we are sharing with you today and will continue to reduce the number of individuals and families in shelter. As we move forward, we will continue to grow and build from our many programs that have introduced energy, enthusiasm and success.

Moving from Shelter to Homes

Last month we celebrated the first year anniversary of Advantage New York, our program focused on the true measure of success- moving families into homes. Since Advantage's inception, more than 4,000 leases have been signed, nearly half of those through Work Advantage. That is the equivalent of one lease signed every 20 minutes of the business day since January 1st. In the time it takes most of us to get a cup of coffee, a family or individual has secured a home of their own. At the end of Advantage's first year, 85 percent of the program's participants are still employed. The overwhelming majority are reaching financial independence, contributing their rent payments on time and depositing a portion of their earnings into a bank account. Average savings are close to \$600 over the course of a year, no small amount to those who once were dependent on shelter.

What I have to say next is extraordinary: *no client who has left shelter through Advantage New York re-entered shelter.* Please be assured that I will do everything possible to maintain this record of success. We are heading in the right direction. We have created a program that addresses the needs of clients and provides critical support services in assisting them to remain stably housed in the community. Based on present results, we project more than 5,700 clients will move out of shelter through Advantage New York, next year.

Prevention

As you know, in January we expanded our HomeBase program citywide, developing twelve homelessness prevention centers across New York. These centers are located in communities with the highest demand for shelter. Our new contracts expand prevention services available through HomeBase to at-risk families in the community and those families applying for shelter, while at the same time providing aftercare services to families who leave shelter. Since the implementation of our new HomeBase model in July, 2007, providers helped 350 families and single adults return to stable housing in the community and avert the need for shelter altogether. Not only is HomeBase an effective prevention program, but fiscally responsible, saving \$1 million in shelter costs for every 50 families and single adults who face the problem early on, and do not need to enter the shelter system.

In FY 09, DHS will invest more than \$20 million for HomeBase services and \$5 million in anti-eviction legal services. To ensure we target our prevention resources most effectively, we will reprogram \$1.5 million in anti-eviction legal services funding to expand HomeBase aftercare services. This step compensates for the loss of State aftercare funding and ensures we have the necessary capacity to serve the growing number of families exiting the shelter system on the Advantage New York program. We

are pleased that the State will continue to fund anti-eviction services in New York City and that the Council has made funding for these services a priority.

Street Outreach

I am excited to tell you that DHS is, effectively, taking to the streets. As you are aware, in the current fiscal year DHS restructured its outreach efforts. We now have in place a more coordinated and expanded system, streamlined to move clients directly from the street to a bed. After taking the time to survey those clients living on the streets, we listened, learned, and implemented what they told us was needed. The Outreach program, in essence, eliminates the sometimes cumbersome intake procedure. Today's teams process on the pavement and make immediate headway for clients. Since fall of last year, over 600 chronically homeless New Yorkers have moved off the streets through the Outreach program.

As our HOPE 2008 numbers indicate, we are moving in the right direction. The HOPE 2008 survey estimates that 3,306 unsheltered individuals are living on the streets, a 12 percent decrease from 2007 and an amazing 25 percent decrease from 2005, the first year we did the HOPE Count in all five boroughs. This means that there are 1,100 fewer people living on our streets today than in 2005.

Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget

The Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 allows DHS to build on successes and moves us closer to meeting our goal of reducing homelessness. In developing the budget, we went to great lengths to preserve agency programs that would continue our accomplishments from FY 08 and meet the needs of all those who come to us seeking shelter and other services.

For the current Fiscal Year, 2008, the Department's expense budget is \$808 million. Fiscal Year 2009 anticipates a budget of \$754 million. The \$754 million total budget allocates \$266 million to services for single adults, \$425 million to services for families, and \$63 million to support services.

For the five-year period FY08-FY12 our capital budget is \$200 million. Over these five years, capital projects for building interiors total \$13 million, and projects for building exteriors total \$39 million.

The DHS Executive Budget addresses fiscal responsibility. The Executive Budget reflects \$25 million in city tax levy (CTL) budget reductions for FY 09. I am confident that this budget takes the necessary steps to ensure fiscal responsibility, while fully allowing the Department to continue vigorous work in reducing homelessness.

At this time I would like to discuss with you some of those budget reductions included in the Executive Budget for FY 09:

- **Focusing Funding on Expanding Outreach**

In FY07, funding was made available to DHS for additional costs associated with decentralizing the adult men's intake system. However, the Outreach program saw unprecedented success since its inception, serving as a better option to serving clients than these multiple centers. As DHS no longer plans to move forward with its initial plan to decentralize intake, the entire \$7.161 million originally allocated was put forth as part of the Agency's FY09 January Plan Budget reduction for FY09, with \$6.161 million in FY10 and the out years. We are eliminating the balance of the funds- \$1 million in the FY09 Executive Budget.

As services evolve and success is seen across the board, the Department will also relocate centralized intake to a new and improved facility at the Bedford Atlantic Armory in Brooklyn. This move presents an opportunity to redesign the men's intake facility, making it better, faster and more services rich. In moving this intake center to the Armory, DHS is planning on reducing the current capacity from 350 to 230 beds. The ratio of staff to clients will go up. Security to client ratios will improve as well. So the number of staff and security available to the Bedford Atlantic clients will be higher than ever before. A greater array of assistance and programs will be offered to those at the shelter. In short, we will reinvent Bedford Atlantic Armory.

- **Drop-In Center Reduction**

Over the past year, the Department of Homeless Services has restructured outreach services to people who live on the streets, with the goal of reducing their ranks by increasing the number who move to safe housing. Safe Haven and stabilization beds offer low-threshold shelter for clients who are not ready for structured shelter or independent living. We know that by providing these immediate housing alternatives to the chronically street homeless, we are able to increase chances they will accept housing. To date we have 208 Safe Haven beds in Manhattan, with a goal of 500 citywide by the end of this year.

This new model allows us to rely less on Drop-In Centers and this budget includes steps to close two Drop-In Centers and to use funds to create more Safe Haven beds. The funding conversion will occur in FY10; therefore \$4.6 million of funding was given up as a PEG in FY09 as part of the FY09 January Plan. The Agency intended that this funding would be restored in FY10 to fund additional Safe Havens. In order to meet the FY09 Executive Plan reduction target, \$1.9 million of the \$4.6 million was PEG'd in the out years. The remaining balance of \$2.7 million will be reserved for Safe Haven in the out-years.

Of course, street outreach teams will continue to be available in all sections of the city to provide necessary resources to those individuals in need of services.

- **Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**

Finally, I would like to report that the Executive Budget included a COLA for human service contracted providers. This COLA will allow agencies that have contracted with the city before July 1, 2007 to give raises to their staff.

It is a three percent increase in direct employee salaries effective July 1, 2008 (FY 09). Then there will also be a two percent and then four percent compounded general wage increase effective July 1, 2009 (FY 10) and July 1, 2010 (FY11). These two COLAs will be funded by productivity improvements and other operational savings.

The city is committed to working with providers to identify the additional savings. A public-private task force is being convened with representatives from both Providers and City agencies to identify mechanisms for achieving savings. The task force will explore productivity measures, help to quantify savings, and implement these measures for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. The out year increases will be limited to the amount of savings achieved.

Conclusion

I would like to thank you for the City Council's continued commitment to the issue of homelessness and I look forward to working with you as we work to meet our goal of reducing homelessness in New York City. Homelessness is an issue many of us face daily, seeing it in our neighborhoods or on our way to work. It impacts each of us and leaves a lasting mark. I recognize that all of you are dedicated to finding permanent housing for New York's homeless, and I thank you for your hand in our efforts. I am glad to answer any questions that you may have about the agency's budget.

City Council General Welfare Committee Testimony –

Working Parents Initiative

Good afternoon. My name is Moira Dolan, Assistant Director, Public Policy at District Council 37, AFSCME. On behalf of DC 37 and the NY Union Child Care Coalition, I am pleased to give the General Welfare Committee a progress report on the Working Parents for a Working New York initiative – a multi-union labor management project funded by the City Council and sponsored by Council Member Bill DeBlasio. Cornell University will study the impact of child care subsidy assistance to working families. We have completed enrollments for the control and subsidy groups:

- Health and Hospitals Corporation- mainly clerical, housekeeping, nurse aide titles;
- School Safety Agents represented by Local 237 Teamsters and employed by the NYPD and
- 1199 Home Care Workers in eight non-profit agencies.

Each group will have up to 105 participants total.

Members have been notified whether they will be in the group that will receive up to \$4,000 in child care assistance, or in the smaller control group, which will not receive subsidy assistance but will receive a \$60 stipend for each completed survey questionnaire. The first questionnaire, the baseline, was completed, and in one year a follow up questionnaire will be administered to both the subsidy and control groups. Each employer

group has its own subsidy and control group to compare similar workers and industries.

The parent questionnaire data is completed regarding parents current child care and work situations. Shortly we will be able to assess whether parents improved their childcare as a result of getting access to subsidy funds. Anecdotally we know that quite a few parents have upgraded to regulated or center based care from informal care. One reason that employers say time and attendance is a problem is due to unreliable child care providers, so the study may show that where parents can afford to upgrade, it will benefit the employee, the employer, and the child who will have a better developmental experience.

Over the length of the study, which we are asking the City Council to fund for a second year; at \$1 million to cover the costs of the subsidies, administration and the study, Cornell researchers will measure the effect on time and attendance, performance evaluation and job retention. In addition to the baseline information, the employers are providing information on the participant's time and attendance from March '07 to February '08, performance evaluations and dates of hire so that these factors may be measured objectively a year from now. The follow up questionnaires to the participants will also measure changes in employee satisfaction and willingness to stay on the job as a result of receiving assistance.

Naturally, the goal of the study is to show that parents who have assistance will be better and more productive workers. Cornell University, Institute of Workplace Studies is conducting the study in order to make sure it is done in the most professional manner and yet is also worker friendly. I can tell you that the workers are very enthusiastic about the project and are grateful that this was introduced and funded. Additional innovative aspects of the program include the option of payments to the providers through a debit card system, and parenting workshops to participants led by Child Care Inc., to allow parents to gain skills and strategies from professional educators and peer to peer to help them at home and at work to deal with child care issues. A workshop will be held later this week at Harlem Hospital, and another next week at Lincoln Hospital.

Finally, you should know that the initiative has been accepted for a conference presentation at the National Labor Management Conference in Washington D.C. in June. On behalf of DC 37 and our union and management partners, I am proud that the City Council is responsible for making it possible for working people and public employers in HHC, home care and school safety to have this terrific opportunity to show the effect of child care assistance on working parents.

Thank you and I would be happy to take any questions.

City Council Testimony
City Council Social Services Committee
March 13, 2008
From Ralph Palladino
2nd Vice President of DC 37 Local 1549

Local 1549 represents 18,000 clerical employees working for the City of New York. Our members work in the Human Resources Administration, public hospitals and nearly every other city agency. We are critical to the city in maintaining records, generating revenues and in serving the public.

I would like to thank the City Council for enhancing and supporting the increased funding for enrollment for Food Stamps, funding the building of the Bellevue Hospital Childcare Center (which now has a long waiting list), and especially the Committee Chair for the support for the Working New York Childcare program.

We support the increased role for 311 in enhancing city services. We have been proposing this for the past two years.

It is not in the public's interest to cut vital programs such as childcare, and other children's services. This is especially wrong since there is money available to save and enhance all the services that would be cut if the Executive Budget were passed.

It is equally wrong to propose any tax cuts at a time when we face budget deficits. We should be seeking new revenues instead

The Reagan-Bush era of cutting government spending, services and employees should come to an end. The results of the mid-term elections two years ago and the success of both Obama and Clinton despite calling for more government programs and raising income taxes on the rich should send a signal to every political leader that it is time to destroy the myth that we are "doing more with less." We are not doing enough.

Local 1549 revenue raising proposals for the budget are:

- 1. Civilianize the Uniformed Work Forces.** It is a waste of money to have higher-paid uniformed employees do clerical work. We estimate a savings of \$150 million if civilianization takes place as it has in other cities. Yet the Executive Budget proposes freezing hiring for both uniformed and clerical positions. This means replacing clerks who average around \$28,000 a year with uniformed service employees who make at least twice the salary. The NYPD, Sanitation, Corrections and Fire Departments must civilianize.
- 2. End Wasteful Contracting Out.** DC 37 estimates a savings of \$121 million a year savings and better quality control
- 3. End Corporate Welfare.** The minimum corporate income tax rate has not risen in New York since 1966. In addition, The NY Post and Daily News have documented that giving corporate tax breaks in order to save jobs has not worked. The just revealed sweetheart real estate deal between the city and Goldman Sachs whose profits were over \$11 billion last year is a disgrace.
- 4. Restore the Personal Income Tax surtax on the wealthy.** This tax was instituted in the city a few years ago and there were no economic consequences as a result. Connecticut and New Jersey have lower tax rates on the rich.

Testimony of Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter

Restore Funding for the NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

I am Anne Teicher, CEO of the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter. I am here to oppose DHS's decision not to renew our \$1.2 million contract to operate the *The Neighborhood Center for Homeless People (NCHP)*. NCS has operated this drop-in/referral center on the Upper East Side, for nearly 20 years.

DHS funds the largest portion of this program's \$1.5 million budget, with \$140,000 coming from DOHMH and \$250,000 of private funding. This decision would destroy the community's most crucial resource for homeless people.

Working in partnership, the religious and civic organizations on the Upper East Side have built a referral and service network of soup kitchens and shelters, with NCHP at the hub. Over the past year, along with outreach teams, police, neighbors and other social service agencies, they referred 825 different people.

First and foremost, the Center provides safety for our guests and the community. Housing placement is the ultimate goal for everyone served at NCHP but it is not the only measure of success. At NCS we measure success when we help people achieve psychiatric stability, address health and mental health issues, initiate and support recovery from substance abuse, prepare them for the workforce, and for independent living so that they will not return to the streets.

DHS cites its budgetary needs and policy reasons for shutting down NCHP, including phasing out drop-in centers in favor of Safe Havens.

Their plan is premature and will serve only a fraction of the need:

- There are only **208** safe-haven beds throughout the City, with very few vacancies and funding for a total of only 500. Citywide, over 1,400 people spend the night in the ten drop-in centers or the volunteer-run shelters that serve them. NCHP alone serves up to 83 people a day.
- Today, local churches and synagogues send all street homeless people directly to NCHP for immediate service. Referrals to Safe Havens can only be made by the outreach teams, but only if there is a vacancy and they qualify.
- If someone has been on the street for less than a year, they are not even eligible for safe havens or outreach services, only shelters. Most of the people we serve feel unsafe in the City's *homeless shelters* and will simply refuse to go. A 2002 DHS survey found that 37% of the City's homeless population using drop-in centers found shelters to be dangerous and unsafe. About 20 of our current clients who do not qualify for housing or safe havens are refusing to go to shelters. They will be back on the streets.
- While, the Safe Haven model is a good one, one size does not fit all. A segment of the homeless population chooses drop-in centers for a reason. There needs to be a variety of doors that open to services.

This decision will close a facility which has been good for homeless people and good for the community, leaving hundreds of homeless people on the streets of our community every year.

This is not good budgetary or social policy. Community Board 8 has voted overwhelmingly to save NCHP. All of our local elected officials support this program. This community says YES to helping homeless people in its backyard.



Child Care, Inc.

**Testimony before the General Welfare Committee
New York City Council
May 13, 2008**

**Presented by
Betty Holcomb, Policy Director
Child Care, Inc.**

Child Care, Inc. works to assure access to high quality, affordable early care and education services for every family who needs them. As one of the first child care resource and referral agencies in the country, CCI's 25-year presence in the field has given us a thorough understanding of the diverse early care and education communities and made us a respected source of authoritative information for parents and providers, advocates and elected officials, the media and policymakers.

We have worked closely with the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Education, as well as the Mayor's Policy Steering Committee on Early Care and Education, to expand high-quality early learning opportunities for children across the city. We also work energetically to advocate for full-day, year-round early learning programs, which meet the needs of children, families and communities.

As managers of the city's regional Infant Toddler Technical Assistance Resource Center, we have also worked diligently to expand and improve child care for children under the age of 3. We have also worked closely with ACS to fulfill their strategic goal of aging down programs across the city.

We bring **four key concerns** to these hearings:

- 1) Continued **funding for and a modest expansion of the council's full-day pre-k initiative**, which proved to be a remarkable success story last year.
- 2) **Investment in the expansion of infant-toddler services**, and funds to support renovations of existing classrooms to serve this age group.
- 3) **Reinvestment of the funds freed up by the transfer of Universal Prekindergarten funding to ACS.**

- 4) **The need for more effective interagency collaboration** to meet the complex needs of low-income families and children.

We want to be clear: We do understand the city faces a tough budget year, and that ACS is doing its best to maximize resources. The three priorities we have set forward represent a modest new investment in full-day pre-k at community sites, and a reinvestment of funding to support infant-toddler care.

Certainly, like most of you, we would like to see much broader investment in early care and education in the coming year. We know that children benefit enormously and taxpayers will get a return of up to \$27 for every dollar invested.¹ We appreciate the Council's, and especially this committee's, advocacy for these services over the years.

We also know that the Administration for Children's Services is in the process of a major planning effort to redefine the way it funds services going forward. While the thrust is to promote full enrollment in programs – a concept we heartily support – we are concerned about the process so far. We are concerned about whether ACS has a full understanding of why some programs may be under-enrolled, and whether payment systems now under consideration will provide enough funding for the core services that researchers recognize contribute to positive outcomes for children. That includes qualified staff and family support services. The policy brief attached to this testimony provides more detail on that front.

But I now would like to elaborate on our four top priorities in this budget season:

1) Full-Day Prekindergarten at Community Sites

This year, **the City Council, under the vigorous leadership of the Speaker, spearheaded a new investment in full-day prekindergarten at ACS-contracted centers.** The initiative proved to be a remarkable success, expanding full-day, year-round options for families and thus creating broader access for many children of working families. By diversifying the funding streams at ACS-contracted sites, the initiative also allowed some programs to expand and age down their programs, creating new classrooms for children under the age of 3. We can provide details to any interested council members on these benefits, including the way the new funding helped programs to diversify the students attending their programs and, in some cases, even add new classrooms. But given the shortage of time, we want to make the point the initiative was a success, even a bargain for its \$5 million price tag. **We urge the Council to not only fight to baseline this funding, but to at least double the funding and**

¹ The Perry Preschool Project has tracked children who attended high-quality pre-k for more than 40 years, and has detailed the savings that accrue to taxpayers. Website tk. The research has prompted Federal Reserve economists to identify pre-k as the most effective public investment that cities can make.

make that funding available to a broader universe of community-based organizations.

2) Investment in the expansion of infant-toddler services, and funds to support renovations of existing classrooms to serve this age group.

ACS has long had the expansion and improvement of services for children under 3 as a top priority in its strategic plan. Yet to date, the investment in the effort has been small. Even though there is still only one slot for every five babies and toddlers who need out-of-home care, and even though more than 50 percent of the calls received by the New York Child Care Consortium are from parents seeking such care, the city's progress on this front has been abysmally slow. There are only about 600 more slots for children under 3 than there were four years ago. **We urge the council to create a pool of funds to support start-up and modest upgrading to shift classroom capacity to serve these younger children.**

3) Reinvestment of the funds freed up by the transfer of Universal Prekindergarten funding to ACS.

Last year, the city transferred \$5 million in Universal Prekindergarten funding to ACS, as part of the effort to meet expansion targets for pre-k. ACS promised to reinvest the child care funding that was saved in the transfer, estimated to be about \$3.5 million at the time, in expansion of services for infants and toddlers. We urge the council to make sure that ACS does re-invest those funds and expand services for children under the age of 3.

4) The need for more effective interagency collaboration to meet the complex needs of low-income families and children.

This spring, both ACS and the Department of Education are engaged in long-term planning, to make the best use of resources and expand early care and education options for families. We remain concerned that this planning remains siloed, without an integrated approach. We have raised concerns at other City Council hearings about how the city's new approach to paying for child care services could jeopardize the availability and quality of services in low-income communities. This is further complicated by the lack of a coordinated funding policy between the two agencies.

The lack of coordination creates particularly serious barriers for the children most at-risk of school failure, and for families who are already economically challenged. Their lives are complex, as are their needs. We want to ensure that the city's policies will support the difficult-to-serve families, including those who are homeless or newly settled, families on public assistance and those

transitioning to work. The children in these families may not always have consistent attendance, and their eligibility for services may vary, even in the course of a year, with family circumstances.

As one small step, the city should launch a major outreach and marketing campaign regarding the availability of services in child care, Head Start, and pre-k. Parents need this information, and they need it in the next two months.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION— WHAT IT COSTS

BUDGET SERIES: FULL-DAY, YEAR-ROUND
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM



The research on early childhood education is clear: Programs must be of high quality to produce positive outcomes for children. This policy brief is the second in our series aimed at identifying the core components of successful early childhood programs and the costs associated with each component. In this case, we examine the costs of full-day, year-round programs that so many families need. These programs promote healthy cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and offer a schedule that meets the needs of working parents.

They operate under a variety of names, including child care, preschool, early childhood development centers, prekindergarten and Head Start, to name a few. Increasingly, providers identify their services as “early learning” and “early education” programs, indicating the goal of preparing children to succeed in school and later life. No matter what they are called, each is dedicated to providing nurturing environments and developmentally-appropriate experiences that enhance children’s ability to learn and grow.

In recent years, economists and researchers have refined their analysis of effective early childhood programs and identified the core components that lead to positive outcomes for children: These programs employ qualified teachers who are properly compensated, and provide other services to assure that children’s development is on track including health care and health screening, proper nutrition and family support. The most effective program models are the

most comprehensive, with consultants that closely monitor physical and mental health and provide extensive support for the child’s family. Research shows that a problem in one of these areas can hinder development in another. A growing body of evidence also supports the drive for public accountability and results. The best programs incorporate processes for continuous improvement.

There is growing recognition that the public sector has a critical role in ensuring that all children have access to quality early learning opportunities. Study after study shows that families cannot afford the cost of high-quality early education, just as they cannot afford the full cost of college education. Without vigorous engagement of the public sector, many young children will be left behind. The evidence also indicates that the public sector must be engaged in supporting programs in a variety of settings to meet the needs of today’s families. It’s also

true that the decisions that public agencies make about the allocation of public resources has a profound impact on the educational opportunities afforded to young children.



This policy brief presents a framework for such decisions, with a close look at what it actually costs to

provide the services needed to produce positive outcomes for children. These generic budgets lay out the key assumptions about staffing, services and administrative support necessary for successful full-day, year-round early childhood programs. They lay the groundwork for assessing the public investments necessary to give all children an equal opportunity to learn and succeed.

The budgets provided here supplement the first brief in our series on program budgets. In that first paper, we focused exclusively on part-day and full school-day pre-k services for three- and four-year-olds at community sites. Our budget assumptions were based on the state's Universal Prekindergarten requirements. We addressed those costs first because the question of funding levels at community sites had emerged as a critical question in pre-k implementation. This second brief takes on the issue of year-round, full-day services as the city moves to the next stage of pre-k implementation and moves toward a more coordinated system of early childhood education in all settings. In this brief, we look at various configurations of programs that serve children from ages two through four, the primary ages of children currently enrolled in preschool programs.

This brief assumes that program funding will come from multiple sources, including public

prekindergarten, federal Head Start and child care funding, and preschool special education as well as parent fees. Many of the city's most successful programs already braid such funding streams to create high quality and comprehensive programs for children. The mix of funding for each site is determined by a number of factors, including a child's eligibility for specific services such as Head Start and child care subsidies, the location of the program and the ability of families to pay for these services.

*Studies show the most
comprehensive programs yield
the best outcomes for children.*

Our previous policy brief, *Early Care and Education—What it Costs, Community Pre-k* presented generic costs for a stand-alone program which enrolled only three- and four-year-olds and operated for a full school-day and for the school year, at a cost of about \$10,500 per year. Those costs were based on a 6 hour, 20-minute day for nine months a year. This new analysis examines the costs of operating a 10-hour day, five days per week, year-round—the kind of program that many working families now require. Studies show the costs are well worth the investment, however, since the most comprehensive programs tend to yield the best outcomes for children.

BUDGET SCENARIOS

The three generic budgets presented in this brief offer typical scenarios for community programs. One is for a six-classroom program,

another is for an eight-classroom site. The total number of children served vary, according to their ages. The per-child cost in programs offering health, nutrition and family support range from about \$13,300 to \$15,083. Costs are higher in programs serving exclusively at-risk children. In such programs, family workers

should be assigned to each class. Research shows that such a public investment pays huge dividends for children, families, communities and taxpayers. Economists estimate a return of up to \$17 for every dollar invested. Federal Reserve economists say pre-k is the best investment the public can make.

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

These assumptions are based on what is required for successful management of a program operating ten hours per day, five days per week, year-round.

- Classrooms are large enough to serve the maximum number of children allowed by regulatory standards: 10 two-year-olds, 15 three-year-olds and 20 four-year-olds.
- Every classroom is led by a certified teacher, as required in state regulatory standards. Salaries reflect entry-level compensation for public school teachers with comparable education. (However, these teachers work year-round, not just the school year).
- Every classroom will have three full time staff assigned including one full time appropriately certified teacher, assistant teacher and teacher aide. Three staff will be available to cover the pre-k day, as appropriate. At least two staff are present at all times.
- The director's qualifications and salary are based on the starting salary for an Assistant Principal in the public school.
- A full-time social worker, as well as consultants in mental health, health and nutrition are included as core components. (Programs serving primarily at-risk children have a family worker for each class).
- Administrative expenses include secretarial, financial and janitorial services, at 5% of personnel costs.
- The OTPS expenses for rent and related expenses are based on an assumption of 75 square feet of classroom and ancillary space per child at a cost of \$15 per square foot¹, plus other non-personnel expenses.

Many programs have facilities cost in excess of this amount due to a variety of factors. OTPS costs include occupancy—rent, utilities, maintenance and repairs; insurance, supplies, classroom, food & kitchen; equipment, postage, printing, phone and audit as well as staff development and other non-personnel expenses.

SCENARIO A

GENERIC YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

105 CHILDREN, AGES 3 – 4

KEY ASSUMPTIONS 6 GROUPS

- 3 Classrooms of 3-year-olds – 15 children each
- 3 Classrooms of 4-year-olds – 20 children each

NOTE: Teachers are certified as per licensing requirements.
Salaries are based on DOE starting salaries in each category

ENTRY LEVEL ANNUAL SALARY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
Assistant Principal	\$88,000
Instructional Coordinator	\$55,000
Teacher, M.A.	\$48,000
Family/Social Worker	\$48,000

SCENARIO A ESTIMATED COSTS: YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM			
			Annual Expense
1	Director	\$88,000	\$88,000
1	Assistant Director	\$55,000	\$55,000
6	Head Teacher	\$48,000	\$288,000
6	Assistant Teacher	\$28,000	\$168,000
6	Aides	\$20,000	\$120,000
1	Family Resource/SW	\$48,000	\$48,000
Subtotal program salaries			\$767,000
Benefits @ 30% salaries			\$230,100
Subtotal salaries and benefits			\$997,100
240 hr/yr	Mental Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
120 hr/yr	Nutrition Consultants	\$75/hour	\$9,000
240 hr/yr	Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
Consultant fees			\$47,400
Total program salaries and consultant fees			\$1,044,500
Substitute / 300 days		\$85/day	\$25,500
Total personnel			\$1,070,000
Administrative expenses*		5% of personnel budget	\$53,500
105 children	OTPS**	\$2,600 per child	\$273,000
Total cost			\$1,396,500
Annual cost per child			\$13,300***
Annual cost per classroom			\$232,750

* Includes secretarial, financial and janitorial staff.

** This will vary depending on the size of the program. \$2,500 represents an average for the program. Includes professional development, rent, maintenance, utilities, phone, classroom, supplies, food, insurance, other OTPS assuming 75± square feet per child of program space. See appendix for more detail on OTPS costs.

*** In programs serving exclusively at-risk children, family workers should be assigned to every room at annual cost of about \$238,400 for salaries and benefits. With family workers, the total per-child cost is \$15,570.



SCENARIO B

GENERIC YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

125 CHILDREN, AGES 2 - 4

KEY ASSUMPTIONS 8 GROUPS

- 2 Classrooms of 2-year-olds – 10 children each
- 3 Classrooms of 3-year-olds – 15 children each
- 3 Classrooms of 4-year-olds – 20 children each

NOTE: Teachers are certified as per licensing requirements.
Salaries are based on DOE starting salaries in each category

ENTRY LEVEL ANNUAL SALARY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
Assistant Principal	\$88,000
Instructional Coordinator	\$55,000
Teacher, M.A.	\$48,000
Family/Social Worker	\$48,000

SCENARIO B ESTIMATED COSTS: YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM			
			Annual Expense
1	Director	\$88,000	\$88,000
1	Assistant Director	\$55,000	\$55,000
8	Head Teacher	\$48,000	\$384,000
8	Assistant Teacher	\$28,000	\$224,000
8	Aides	\$20,000	\$160,000
1	Family Resource/SW	\$48,000	\$48,000
Subtotal program salaries			\$958,000
Benefits @ 30% salaries			\$287,400
Subtotal salaries and benefits			\$1,245,400
240 hr/yr	Mental Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
120 hr/yr	Nutrition Consultants	\$75/hour	\$9,000
240 hr/yr	Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
Consultant fees			\$47,400
Total program salaries and consultant fees			\$1,292,800
Substitute / 360 days		\$85/day	\$30,600
Total personnel			\$1,323,400
Administrative expenses*		5% of personnel budget	\$65,915
125 children	OTPS**	\$2,600 per child	\$325,000
Total cost			\$1,714,315
Annual cost per child			\$13,715***
Annual cost per classroom			\$214,289

* Includes secretarial, financial and janitorial staff.

** This will vary depending on the size of the program. \$2,500 represents an average for the program. Includes professional development, rent, maintenance, utilities, phone, classroom, supplies, food, insurance, other OTPS assuming 75± square feet per child of program space. See appendix for more detail on OTPS costs.

*** In programs serving exclusively at-risk children, family workers should be assigned to every room at annual cost of about \$291,200 for salaries and benefits. With family workers, the total per-child cost is \$16,044.

SCENARIO C

GENERIC YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

90 CHILDREN, AGES 2 - 4

KEY ASSUMPTIONS 6 GROUPS

- 2 Classrooms of 2-year-olds – 10 children each
- 2 Classrooms of 3-year-olds – 15 children each
- 2 Classrooms of 4-year-olds – 20 children each

NOTE: Teachers are certified as per licensing requirements.
Salaries are based on DOE starting salaries in each category

ENTRY LEVEL ANNUAL SALARY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
Assistant Principal	\$88,000
Instructional Coordinator	\$55,000
Teacher, M.A.	\$48,000
Family/Social Worker	\$48,000

SCENARIO C ESTIMATED COSTS: YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM			
			Annual Expense
1	Director	\$88,000	\$88,000
1	Assistant Director	\$55,000	\$55,000
6	Head Teacher	\$48,000	\$288,000
6	Assistant Teacher	\$28,000	\$168,000
6	Aides	\$20,000	\$120,000
1	Family Resource/SW	\$48,000	\$48,000
Subtotal program salaries			\$767,000
			Benefits @ 30% salaries
			\$230,100
Subtotal salaries and benefits			\$997,100
240 hr/yr	Mental Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
120 hr/yr	Nutrition Consultants	\$75/hour	\$9,000
240 hr/yr	Health Consultants	\$80/hour	\$19,200
Consultant fees			\$47,400
Total program salaries and consultant fees			\$1,044,500
		Substitute / 300 days	\$85/day
			\$25,500
Total personnel			\$1,070,000
		Administrative expenses*	5% of personnel budget
			\$53,500
90 children	OTPS**	\$2,600 per child	\$234,000
Total cost			\$1,357,500
Annual cost per child			\$15,083***
Annual cost per classroom			\$226,250

* Includes secretarial, financial and janitorial staff.

** This will vary depending on the size of the program. \$2,500 represents an average for the program. Includes professional development, rent, maintenance, utilities, phone, classroom, supplies, food, insurance, other OTPS assuming 75± square feet per child of program space. See appendix for more detail on OTPS costs.

*** In programs serving exclusively at-risk children, family workers should be assigned to every room at annual cost of about \$238,400 for salaries and benefits. With family workers, the total per-child cost is \$17,732.

APPENDIX

OTHER THAN PERSONNEL EXPENSES (OTPS)
YEAR-ROUND, EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

Estimated costs

		A 90 children 6 groups Ages 3-4	B 105 children 6 groups Ages 2-4	C 125 children 8 groups Ages 2-4
OTHER THAN PERSONNEL SERVICES				
OCCUPANCY				
Rent ¹	\$15/sq ft	101,250	118,125	140,625
Utilities		6,000	6,000	8,000
Maintenance/Repairs	\$1,500/class	9,000	9,000	12,000
Insurance ²	\$100/child	9,000	10,500	12,500
TOTAL OCCUPANCY		125,250	143,625	173,125
SUPPLIES				
Classroom, Office, Maintenance	\$170/child	15,300	17,850	21,250
Food & Kitchen Supplies ³	\$625/child	56,250	65,625	78,125
TOTAL SUPPLIES		71,550	83,475	99,375
TOTAL EQUIPMENT⁴	\$100/child	9,000	10,500	12,500
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE⁵		12,000	12,000	14,000
TOTAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT	\$1,000 x FTE staff	19,000	19,000	25,000
TOTAL OTHER⁶		6,000	6,000	8,000
TOTAL OTPS		242,800	274,600	332,000
TOTAL ANNUAL OTPS PER CHILD		2,697	2,615	2,656

¹ Assumes 7,000 square feet for smaller programs and 9,000 square feet for the 8-classroom program.

² Includes liability, fire/theft, board.

³ For many programs, CACFP funds will cover the cost of food.

⁴ Includes classroom, kitchen, office.

⁵ Includes phone, postage, printing, audit.

⁶ Includes parent programs, health, misc.



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CCI seizes every opportunity to promote quality early learning, healthy development and care for all children, birth through school-age.



Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

TESTIMONY

of

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

**Before the
New York City Council General Welfare Committee
And Women's Issues Committee**

Executive Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2008-09

May 13, 2008

Prepared by:

**Jill Poklemba,
Senior Policy Analyst for Workforce Development and Income Security**

**Vani Sankarapandian,
Senior Policy Analyst for Early Childhood Education and Child Welfare**

My name is Vani Sankarapandian and I am the Senior Policy Analyst for Early Childhood Education and Child Welfare at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA). For 85 years, FPWA has been a leading policy advocate for individuals and families served by our almost 300 member human service agencies and churches in and around New York City. FPWA promotes the social and economic well-being of greater New York's most vulnerable by strengthening human service organizations and advocating for just public policies.

I would first like to thank the City Council for the opportunity to testify on needed investments that will strengthen vulnerable populations across New York City. Although we understand that the City is facing a very tight fiscal year given increasingly grim economic projections, we urge the City to ensure that its neediest citizens are protected. It is often these children and families who suffer the most during times of economic crisis.

We would also like to thank Mayor Bloomberg for recognizing the hard work and valuable contributions of employees in the non-profit sector through the funding of a multi-year COLA for programs under contract with various City agencies, including ACS, DFTA, DYCD, DHS, and HRA.

Today, I will discuss FPWA's budget priorities in the areas of early childhood education, child welfare and income security.

Early Childhood Education

Quality early care and education is a vital component of preparing children for future academic achievement and success in later life. Children who have the benefit of a preschool education are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, participate in the workforce, and avoid risky behavior such as drug use and criminal activities.¹ Furthermore, as noted by the Mayor's Commission for Economic Opportunity, scarce child care resources in New York City continually affect low-income working families. FPWA agrees with the

¹ Schulman and Barnett, "What Impacts Does Preschool Education Have on Personal Responsibility and Related Social Behavior?," National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006. Available at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/ImpactsOfPreKOnLifeChoices.pdf>.

Commission's 2006 report, which called on New York City to "do all it can" to invest in quality early care and education programs.²

In recent hearings before the New York City Council's General Welfare Committee and the State Assembly's Committee on Children and Families, FPWA, together with Child Care Inc., United Neighborhood Houses, and UJA-Federation of New York, expressed concerns about the City's "Pay-for-Children Enrolled" (PFE) initiative. Under PFE, which will be phased-in beginning in September 2008, child care centers will only be reimbursed for the number of children enrolled and attending their programs.

We agree that vacancies in child care centers represent a wasteful expense for New York City, and we support every effort to ensure that every seat is filled and that resources are used effectively. At the same time, our ultimate goal is to help ensure that affordable quality care is available to all children in low-income families throughout New York City. For these reasons, we make the following recommendations:

- 1. We must ensure that the funding changes proposed under the "Pay-for-Children Enrolled" initiative do not threaten the financial viability of existing child care programs.**

The payment structure as outlined to date does not take into account the fact that child care centers have many fixed, and rising, costs that do not vary or decline according to the number of children enrolled. For centers struggling to recruit children but still falling short of their contracted capacity, this new reimbursement initiative may mean the loss of crucial funding that could affect their ability to meet these fixed costs and ultimately, to remain in operation. We urge the City to provide centers with a funding level that addresses their actual costs. In addition, it is our understanding that there will be a transition period for implementing PFE, and we support this approach.

- 2. The City's "Pay-for Children Enrolled" initiative represents a departure from the traditional child care budget model. Child care programs and their sponsoring Boards, staff, and clients must be supported as they accommodate the changes.**

² "Increasing Opportunity and Reducing Poverty in New York City," New York City Commission for Economic Opportunity, September 2006.

Technical assistance and training must be available on an ongoing basis to sponsoring Boards, Directors, fiscal personnel and others to ensure that each center is equipped to handle the changes. ACS has made an initial commitment to providing technical assistance and training in a number of areas, including marketing, business planning, and governance, and we call on the City to ensure that this commitment remains strong.

3. Full Enrollment is a shared responsibility. Child care centers must have the City's assistance in enrolling families.

New York City and the Administration have an obligation to ensure that low-income and public assistance families have access to subsidized child care assistance. This obligation cannot, and should not, fall to centers alone.

ACS should work with centers and families to identify and understand the significant barriers they face in the child care enrollment process. This information should then inform strategies to resolve these issues without compromising the ability of centers to serve families in need. For example, more must be done to provide staff and training support to centers conducting on-site eligibility services, to identify and address administrative obstacles that are currently causing serious application processing delays, to improve and strengthen information resources for parents, and to actively conduct outreach in communities and neighborhoods.

4. Increased funding for the New York City child care system is critical to meeting the child care needs of low-income working families and sustaining high-quality early care programming.

Despite the concerns about under-enrollment, we know that there is great unmet need for child care in New York City. For the child care slots that do exist, many providers are struggling under current funding levels to provide the essential components of a quality early learning experience, including family and social work supports, highly qualified teachers (which requires proper compensation), upgraded facilities, and enriching instructional materials. Although we can appreciate the motivation to eliminate wasteful expenditures on vacant child care slots, we truly believe that the City cannot afford to withdraw funding in any amount from the child care system. In fact, *expanded* funding is crucial to increasing the number of families who can access subsidized care and preserving the quality of early care services.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of ensuring that communities in need, particularly communities that have been historically under-served, have access to subsidized child care programs. Without subsidized care, low-income working parents are forced to shoulder the entire cost of these services, causing serious emotional and economic stress for their families.³ They must place their children in the only care they can afford, which may mean a compromised level of safety and a learning experience that falls short of high-quality, developmentally appropriate care. Moreover, they are left without the reliability of a subsidized care arrangement for their children, which can jeopardize their job security and the financial security of their families.

FPWA will do its part to ensure that child care centers and ACS communicate openly and effectively as they work together to address these serious issues. Fatima Goldman, Executive Director of FPWA, is serving on the City's Project Full Enrollment Task Force, created by ACS Commissioner John Mattingly to advise ACS as it moves forward with its "Pay-for-Children Enrolled" initiative. FPWA looks forward to working with the Commissioner to ensure that the child care community is integrally involved and represented in this process.

Lastly, New York City is currently experiencing a shortage of subsidized care for infants and toddlers. Four-year-old children are nearly ten times more likely to receive subsidized early care and education services than one-year-olds.⁴ This greatly impairs parents' ability to work while their children are under age three, which can have serious implications for the financial stability of low-income families. FPWA urges the City to invest in quality early care and education programs that serve infants and toddlers.

Child Welfare

Tragedies related to child abuse in the past few years have directed attention to the importance of investing in child maltreatment prevention, and remind us all of what can happen if these services are under-funded. Preventive service agencies provide invaluable

³ Coltoff, Torres, and Lifton, "The Human Cost of Waiting for Child Care: A Study," The Children's Aid Society, December 1999. Available at <http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/media/file/humancost.pdf>.

⁴ "Rethinking Child Care: An Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development in New York City," New York City Administration for Children's Services, 2005.

assistance to families at risk of entering the child welfare system. Their workers are the City's ongoing line of defense, promoting and supporting family stability, but ready to intervene if warranted.

FPWA strongly urges the City to restore the \$4.2 million included in last year's budget for the Child Safety Initiative, which reduced preventive service caseload sizes from 15:1 to 12:1. This funding should also be increased by \$156,000, which would allow the City to leverage enough State matching funds to keep the initiative whole, in light of the 2% cut in Local Assistance programs in the Enacted State Budget for FY 2008-2009.

In its 2006 Child Welfare Workload Study, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services examined the effects of high caseloads on child protective, foster care, and preventive services caseworkers and found that excessive caseloads undermine the ability of caseworkers to provide families with the high-quality services they deserve. Reasonable caseloads reduce the amount of time caseworkers must devote to demanding administrative duties, giving workers more time to build strong relationships with families and to resolve crucial issues in an efficient and timely manner. This is increasingly important, as caseworkers face more complicated cases involving large family sizes, non-English speaking clients, and families with serious health and behavioral health issues. Furthermore, agencies who have received this funding in the past have used it to hire new caseworkers, which is an operational change that must be supported by a steady and certain funding stream.

It is also important to note that contract agencies providing foster care and/or preventive services in New York struggle with the same staff burnout and high turnover rate that prompted ACS to launch a \$1 million recruitment effort, including an extensive ad campaign, for its child protective services division.⁵ Preventive caseworkers interact with the same troubled families that confront ACS' CPS division, and we must show the same concern for the caseloads of these caseworkers as we do for ACS caseworkers. Moreover, as ACS moves forward with its child welfare RFP, reasonable caseloads will be essential to allowing caseworkers to successfully accommodate additional responsibilities associated with new

⁵ Kathaleen Lucadamo, "ACS unveils recruitment campaign," *New York Daily News*, March 3, 2008; Marc Santora, "To Recruit Caseworkers, a Dose of Reality," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2008.

initiatives such as Family Team Conferencing. We again urge the City to (1) restore the \$4.2 million allocated in last year's budget to reduce preventive caseloads to a ratio of 12:1 and (2) increase this funding by \$156,000 to account for the State budget cut and keep this initiative whole.

FPWA also strongly urges the City to increase the Child Safety Initiative funding to a total of \$6.5 million, which would not only account for the State budget cut, but also allow the City to reduce caseloads in preventive programs that were not included under the original initiative and ensure that these programs can maintain the ACS-recommended supervisory ratio of 1:5. Across all preventive programs, supervisors are the key to quality, working closely with less experienced workers to make clinical recommendations, advise staff about quality program referral based on their community knowledge and ensure that staff is meeting the exhaustive reporting requirements. As agencies hire more caseworkers, additional funding would allow them to hire new supervisors, thus maintaining the appropriate supervisory ratio of 1:5.

FPWA asks the City to reaffirm its commitment to expanding the capacity of the preventive services system. Although FPWA commends the Mayor for including funding in last year's budget to support 1,000 new slots for preventive services, we urge the Mayor to retain these slots in this year's budget. Reports of child abuse and neglect in New York City have been increasing and these additional slots are necessary to meet the demand for preventive services, which are an essential part of the City's efforts to support families and keep children safely at home when possible. Preventive services also help reduce the use of more costly foster care services, and we urge the City to include funding for the 1,000 additional slots in FY 2008-09.

Finally, we urge the City to restore the \$9 million invested last year in funding for enhanced preventive service in high need communities. Agencies must have access to this funding in order to maintain quality-enhancing programmatic changes.

Income Security

FPWA has a long-standing commitment to a solid safety net and supports for low income families. We also sponsor the Economic Justice and Social Welfare Network (EWN – formerly

WRN) a collaborative of New York City advocates, service providers, policymakers, and current and former public assistance recipients. WRN is committed to promoting policy and budget decisions that enhance social welfare and economic justice goals. FPWA and EWN seek to empower people by giving them the tools and opportunities they need to permanently rise out of poverty.

We ask the City Council to restore \$1.5 million for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) for emergency food programs funded through the Human Resources Administration (HRA) that is once again missing from the Mayor's Financial Plan. The following statistics demonstrate the urgent need for increased EFAP funding in FY 09:⁶

- There has been a 24% increase in those relying on Emergency Food Programs (EFPs) since 2004, which is now up to 1.3 million City residents.
- An increased percentage of those using EFPs are working full-time (57%) and have attended college (24%), demonstrating increased cost of living expenses.
- About 46% of EFP participants receive Food Stamps – up from 31% in 2004. The average monthly Food Stamp benefit is only \$147 per month. Since this is not nearly enough to cover the costs of food, 24% of EFP households run out of Food Stamp benefits in one week or less, 60% run out in two weeks, and 84% run out in three weeks.
- Federal funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has been severely cut, resulting in a shortage of 12 million pounds of food in NYC in the last year alone.

We are also very concerned about the strategies in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget to achieve savings through welfare caseload declines, case closures, and grant adjustments. The Mayor's Executive Budget for FY 09 projects \$22.5 million in savings, of which \$8.5 million are City funds, from implementation of three initiatives to reduce cash assistance expenditures. This is even more than the Mayor's Preliminary Budget, which projected: \$8.3 million in savings from cash assistance re-estimates (resulting in a decrease

⁶ Hunger Safety Net 2007, Food Bank for New York City; available at: www.foodbank.org.

of over 7,000 individuals receiving assistance between December 2007 and June 2008); \$1.2 million in savings from the child support initiative that will increase earnings and child support collections; \$2.4 million in savings from implementation of a new system to generate employment and income verification matches; and \$4.8 million in savings from accelerating the implementation of administrative fair hearing decisions to reduce or close cash assistance cases (\$16.7 million in total). The city looks to be on the verge of a recession, HRA should be constructing caseload projections based upon factors such as increasing unemployment, decreasing earnings and decreasing availability of non-governmental resources. It is crucial to remember that although there are approximately 345,000 individuals as of March 2008 (less than 5% of the total population) receiving welfare⁷ in New York City, there are close to 1.5 million people (nearly 20% of the total population) living below the federal poverty level.⁸

We are supportive of the City Council method of producing \$17 million in savings to the HRA budget by making cuts to the Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV) staff, which primarily conduct fraud detection activities for HRA clients. FPWA is in favor of this method of generating savings as an alternative to the Mayor's proposal. Given that nearly 20% of the City's residents are living below the poverty level and that the economic recession is predicted to worsen in the coming year, it does not make sense to project larger caseload reductions in FY 09. Individuals with limited education and job skills are the most likely to be laid off and the least likely to be able to find a new job. In addition, low-income households have little savings to use for an emergency. Therefore, we urge you to produce savings in a way that will not harm the most vulnerable City residents.

We also ask the City Council to consider expansion of the Job Training Participant (JTP) program to create new positions for welfare recipients. As a transitional jobs model, JTP positions offer a paid work experience with regular education, training and skills development. FPWA recommends the expansion of this program beyond the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Sanitation, and into the following City agencies with

⁷ NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) Facts: January 2008; available at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/hrafacts_2008_01.pdf

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau 2006 American Community Survey (ACS); available at: www.census.gov

demonstrated career pathways: 1) Health and Hospitals Corporation, 2) Department of Education, and 3) Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

FPWA also urges HRA to make significant policy changes to increase overall access to education and training for public assistance recipients, helping people gain access to jobs that lift them and their families out of poverty permanently. The State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has directed all local districts to increase the numbers engaged in education and job skills training activities by 20% by January 2009. In addition, changes in the Final TANF Rule, which take effect on October 1, 2008, allow participation in four-year and advanced degree programs to count within the definition of "Vocational Educational Training," along with one hour of unsupervised homework for each hour of classroom time.

Results of an informal survey of adult literacy providers in New York City conducted by EWN Policy & Advocacy Committee (PAC) members revealed that many welfare recipients that attempt to participate in adult education classes face significant barriers to completion, including lack of access to child care, fulfilling other mandatory work requirements, and receiving approval from HRA. Therefore, HRA should greatly expand efforts to help recipients overcome these barriers by linking them to all available education opportunities, including adult basic education, ESL and GED preparation classes, vocational education and training, and other HRA-approved higher education programs.

Workforce Development – Adult

Restore \$1.5 million for Adult Literacy Services – DYCD

This program provides essential funding to community-based organizations for basic literacy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and GED classes, along with support services. Despite a slight increase in the FY08 City budget, resources to fund adult literacy programs have not kept pace with demand. While a quarter of New York City's adults have inadequate English skills, only about 62,000 are enrolled in government funded literacy programs, with about 2/3 in ESOL programs and 1/3 in adult basic education and GED programs. This means that currently only 54% of the 1.5 million adults and youth with low

literacy skills who need these programs can participate in them. FPWA supports the Coalition of Adult Literacy, which is comprised of community-based organizations that offer adult literacy services and includes many of our member agencies, in advocating for restored funding for this program.

We urge HRA to work in closer collaboration with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), and CUNY to expand welfare recipients' access to the following: Adult Literacy Services, including adult basic education, ESOL, and GED preparation classes; services offered by the Workforce 1 Career Centers, including Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers for training, job placement and career advancement services; and opportunities to enroll in two-year and four-year degree programs at CUNY schools, particularly those that offer specialized academic and career counseling services and accommodate the schedules of non-traditional students.

FPWA also urges the City Council to make an investment in Contextualized Adult Literacy programs that blend basic literacy with vocation-specific training, often through the use of technology and collaborative teaching methods. These programs have proven effective in accelerating participants' progress on their career path, particularly for those with limited English proficiency, who can learn speaking, reading and writing skills in the context of training for a particular trade. These classes should be made available to welfare recipients, particularly since they provide an opportunity for them to participate in an educational activity as a core activity for up to 12 months, since it clearly fits within the definition of "Vocational Educational Training." Expanding access to contextualized adult literacy classes for welfare recipients would also help us achieve the 30% statewide maximum number of recipients that can be engaged in this activity at any given time.

We also request that the City invest in "Green Collar" job training programs targeted to individuals in poverty and those facing greater barriers to employment. As part of PlaNYC 2030 and efforts to retrofit City buildings to be "greener" and more energy efficiency, the City should make targeted investments in job training programs that offer individuals in poverty, including welfare recipients, the opportunity to obtain jobs in green collar industries. Economic forecasters have predicted high demand for green construction workers, energy

efficiency managers, weatherization installers, waste management and recycling workers, and laborers for other City environmental conservation and greening projects. It is essential that HRA partner with SBS, CUNY and other agencies that implement and oversee City energy projects to ensure that these jobs are offered as a means to rise on a "Green Ladder" out of poverty in this newly emerging high growth economic sector.

Workforce Development – Youth

CEO: Support \$9.5 million investment included in Mayor's Executive Budget at minimum for Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) – DYCD

YAIP is an excellent model that offers disconnected young adults ages 16-24 the opportunity to re-connect to the workforce and continuing education and training. The program gives youth participants an intensive short-term work readiness training followed by a paid internship to gain real work experience and learn valuable skills to advance in their career. Participants can earn up to \$2,500 in 14 weeks. In its first year of operation, the program has already shown positive results in linking youth to high quality job experiences and continuing educational opportunities upon completion. In addition, the program has revitalized some low-income communities as youth who graduate from the program serve as role models for their peers. However, YAIP providers have had to turn away many eligible youth because of limited capacity. FPWA urges the City to increase funding for FY 09 and to prioritize YAIP as a critical CEO initiative to maintain and expand in the future.

CEO: Maintain \$3.5 million at a minimum for CUNY Prep – CUNY

This program is a joint initiative of DYCD, the Department of Education (DOE), and CUNY designed to help out-of-school youth ages 16 to 18 to obtain a high school degree or GED and enter post-secondary education. Students participate in a college-focused curriculum, with a strong emphasis on achieving a high score on the GED. After completing their GED, students receive advisement through the College Access Unit and are directly linked to courses as part of the CUNY College Now program. Since 2003, over 530 youth have earned a GED and over 230 have enrolled in college. Additional funding would allow the program to: 1) expand capacity and increase enrollment (currently waiting lists exceed 150 youth for each cycle), 2) build curricula for students at lower reading levels, and 3) accelerate learning through the use

of technology. In addition, increased funding will build upon the College Now 2 and the College Access Retention and Success ("CARS") programs that help improve retention rates for students so that they can complete their college degree.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**New York City Council General Welfare Committee
Administration for Children's Services FY 09 Budget Hearing
May 13, 2008**

**Testimony of Zeyen Wu, Child Welfare Policy Coordinator
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families**

Hello, my name is Zeyen Wu, and I am here today on behalf of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families. CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy group, and we are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American (APA) children and families in New York City. CACF works with over 35 community and social service organizations serving a multitude of different Asian ethnic communities in New York City.

I would like to thank Chairman de Blasio and the City Council General Welfare Committee for having us here today. The Asian Pacific American population continues to grow steadily in New York City, yet their needs and presence in the child welfare system are consistently overlooked.

Background: Asian Pacific Americans represent a diverse range of ethnic groups, cultures, languages, religions, immigration patterns, and socioeconomic statuses. This diversity has proven to be challenging to New York City's child welfare system. Asian Pacific Americans now account for over 12% of the total population and are a diverse population comprised of over 40 ethnic groups and 50 spoken languages in New York City alone.

Connecting the Dots, CACF's report on Asian Pacific Americans in the child welfare system, identified 14 Community Districts in 8 Neighborhood Networks with an Asian Pacific American population over 15%. Within these Neighborhood Networks, 82% of service providers surveyed in *Connecting the Dots* cited linguistic barriers as an issue in serving Asian Pacific American families, and 69% cited cultural barriers. Out of surveyed providers, 78% wanted to conduct more outreach to the Asian Pacific American community.

In addition, while the total number of families in the New York City child welfare system has decreased in the past decade, the percentage of Asian Pacific American families in this system has increased during that same time. Of the over 70 community based organizations contracted by ACS to provide child abuse preventive services, only 5 are Asian Pacific American serving, and they primarily provide services to the Chinese community. There are also no Asian Pacific American foster care agencies in the city.

Recommendations:

- ❖ **Restore caseload reduction funding.** As part of the Preventive Services Action Network (PSAN), an alliance of non-profit advocacy and membership organizations dedicated to improving the quality of, and increasing access to, neighborhood-based preventive services, CACF supports the restoration of Child Safety Initiative caseload reductions. This **\$4.2 million initiative (now \$4.36 million due to state budget cuts)** reduces preventive service caseloads to 12 families for every one caseworker.

Caseload reduction has dramatically improved service delivery at preventive agencies. It allows caseworkers to spend more time with families that are facing complex needs including language barriers, mental health, disability, and housing issues.

Particularly affected are Asian Pacific American families who are limited English proficient. Caseworkers are often called upon to serve as interpreters for families accessing concrete services such as housing, public assistance, or health care. This dramatically increases the amount of time caseworkers must spend with each family. The limited number of agencies with bilingual workers who can speak Asian languages also increases the likelihood that the family resides further away from the agency, also increasing the amount of time necessary to serve each client.

Based on feedback from service providers, CACF has recommended to ACS that it further reduce caseloads for bilingual preventive service cases to 10:1, so a return to 15:1 for general preventive services caseloads would be unacceptable, and may even endanger children and families in need of critical support.

Caseload reduction is also an opportunity to increase the city's share of state tax levy funding. These funds are matched by the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS); last year the city received more than \$8 million due to its \$4.2 million investment.

- ❖ **Restore 1,000 additional preventive slots with 200 reserved for families with specific linguistic needs.** These slots allow preventive programs, which usually operate at full capacity, to expand and serve additional families, especially in emerging immigrant communities. Many families do not have timely access to the proper services because agencies lack language capacity and cultural understanding of families' situations. It is of dire importance that preventive services slots are increased for families whose preferred language is not English. For Asian Pacific Americans in need of support to maintain a stable, healthy family, few options are currently available.
- ❖ **Restore preventive services enhancement funding at \$9 million.** This funding helps keep families safe and healthy by funding prevention services. Funding for this initiative is matched from the state in a formula wherein the state contributes more than 60% of the funding, making investing in preventive service enhancement extremely cost effective.
- ❖ **Support the reduction of staff supervisory ratios to complete the Child Safety Initiative.** With the expansion of preventive services staff, supervisory staff increase must proportionally match caseworker numbers at 5:1. Supervisors serve a crucial management, training, and quality assurance role in preventive services and higher supervisor-to-caseworker ratios at some agencies exponentially increase case oversight responsibility for each supervisor. This increases the possibility of children falling through the cracks of the system and requiring out of home placements of exacerbating existing issues. This funding would ensure that supervisors have a manageable workload and are able to give enough time to each individual case. It also completes the Child Safety Initiative, allowing agencies to operate at full capacity after caseload reductions.

I would like to thank the General Welfare Committee for its time, and we look forward to working with the City Council and ACS on these important issues.