



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
HEARING BY THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER RYAN
ACTING COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION**

**CONCERNING THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION'S
PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND
THE FISCAL 2026 PRELIMINARY MAYOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

Good morning, Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations. My name is Christopher Ryan, and I am the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI). I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about DOI's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

My testimony will focus on DOI's work over the past year; our preliminary budget and staffing; and the agency's new needs' requests that have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and which are critical for DOI's continued operations. I will also outline the difficult cuts that we are being asked to implement for the Executive Budget. Before I begin, I would like to provide some brief but important background to give each of you a better understanding of how we operate and conduct investigations.

DOI is a unique oversight agency, established more than 153 years ago to combat corruption, fraud, waste and mismanagement in New York City government. The City Charter establishes our jurisdiction and grants DOI the authority "to make any study or investigation" which in the opinion of the Commissioner may be in the best interests of the City. The Mayor and the New York City Council also may direct the DOI Commissioner to conduct investigations.

Over the years, Mayors have strengthened DOI's authority through several Mayoral Executive Orders, most notably during the late 1970s through the mid-1980s. Those executive orders give DOI the authority to access most City records, emails and other documents without a subpoena and to compel interviews of City employees and vendors. The executive orders also mandate that all City employees who become aware of suspected corruption or fraud must report it directly and promptly to DOI or risk discipline. DOI has the power to subpoena third parties – non-City employees – for documents and for testimony, which DOI is authorized to take under oath.

A Mayoral Executive Order in the mid-1980s reorganized DOI to its current structure, with all Inspectors General reporting to the DOI Commissioner. This shift removed mayoral agency oversight of Inspectors General, and provided DOI with an important measure of independence, establishing DOI as the City agency responsible for combatting City-related corruption.

DOI's investigations and factual findings can lead to criminal prosecutions, disciplinary proceedings and other administrative actions. Our staff has deep knowledge of government operations and its complexities and the many ways that corruption can creep into City government, thereby undermining access to City services and siphoning precious public funds.

Based on our investigations, DOI makes recommendations for policy and procedural reforms to City agencies to address corruption vulnerabilities and prevent misconduct from re-occurring. DOI also issues public reports that have a significant impact in New York City. These public reports discuss DOI's factual findings and reasoning for the recommendations that we issue.

In addition to criminal and disciplinary investigations, DOI investigates potential conflicts of interest that may result in referrals to the Conflicts of Interest Board, as well as claims of retaliation against employees of agencies and City contractors who report misconduct and are protected by the City's Whistleblower Law. DOI also provides other critical services to the City, including background investigations for certain City employees, vendor name checks for City-funded vendors, and integrity monitoring services for large City projects and to rehabilitate needed vendors with integrity concerns.

DOI's work saves the City money by preventing fraud, identifying waste, and receiving millions of dollars in asset forfeiture and restitution funds that are collected as a result of some of our investigations.

DOI's Accomplishments in 2025

DOI's investigations in Calendar Year 2025 covered a broad range of areas – from strengthening the safety of young people in the City's care, protecting public funds, and tackling crimes that compromise New Yorkers' access to essential needs such as housing and wages. DOI issued 14 public reports and saved more than \$5 million for the City through DOI's monitorship of the asylum seeker contracts. In addition, DOI investigations led to the collection of more than \$6 million in financial recoveries to the City. DOI made 174

arrests, fielded nearly 13,000 complaints, provided corruption-prevention training to more than 37,000 City employees and others through our digital learning module, webinars and in-person lectures, and issued 113 policy and procedure recommendations to improve City operations and best practices.

These are only some of the agency's accomplishments. The full list is catalogued in our year-end report, which was issued last month and is attached to your testimony. I want to take a moment to recognize the hard-working and dedicated staff at DOI who made these accomplishments happen through their deep commitment to DOI's mission and to New Yorkers. Their work is even more noteworthy when we recognize that it was achieved while simultaneously conducting numerous major investigations focused on a number of high-level City officials. Those investigations required a significant number of staff and resources — all while we faced continuous budget cuts and hiring and retention challenges.

I'd like to highlight some of the criminal cases that DOI worked on in 2025. They included:

- The indictment of former Mayor Adams's chief advisor and eight other co-defendants in an alleged bribery conspiracy case;
- The conviction on bribery, fraud or extortion offenses of all 70 employees of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) charged in a February 2024 sweep that touched almost one-third of NYCHA's 365 developments in each of the five boroughs;
- The sentencing of two former Chiefs in the Fire Department to prison terms for providing expedited plan reviews and priority inspections in return for bribes;
- The guilty pleas of principals of a fire alarm maintenance company and their sentencing to prison time for a decade-long scheme to defraud multiple City agencies by overbilling those agencies using fabricated invoices with fraudulently inflated prices and shell companies;
- The charging of Youth Development Specialists with the City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) with bringing in contraband to a juvenile center in Brooklyn and, separately, the sentencing of four former ACS Youth Development Specialists for participating in contraband smuggling;
- The indictment of landlords on charges of allegedly harassing two older-rent-regulated tenants in Chelsea, resulting in these tenants frequently living without heat for extended periods each winter and other dangerous conditions;
- Two separate wage theft cases that resulted in guilty pleas and the return of stolen wages to victimized workers;
- The sentencing of a former fraud investigator with the Department of Homeless Services and another individual to prison for stealing homeless victims' identities to apply for unemployment benefits;
- The sentencing of a former employee with the New York City Employee's Retirement System to one to three years in prison for stealing pension checks valued at \$624,000 from two retirees;
- An array of contraband smuggling investigations on Rikers Island that resulted in charges, and in some cases convictions of correction officers for their role in these crimes; and
- Guilty pleas by a construction safety training school and its president for issuing certificates to workers without providing the required safety training. The company lost its security license, and the president was sentenced to one year in jail, 100 hours of community service and was ordered to forfeit \$100,000. A total of 22 defendants associated with this case have pleaded guilty or been found guilty after trial.

DOI's work goes beyond its criminal cases, and I would like to also highlight some of those efforts:

- In 2025, DOI established the Protest Response Oversight Unit, which is overseeing the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) response to certain protests, as agreed to in the City's settlement of a lawsuit over the policing during the summer 2020 demonstrations. The work of that unit is already underway, and it is currently reviewing two protests selected by the plaintiffs in that litigation: the protest at Brooklyn College in May 2025 and the protest at 26 Federal Plaza in June 2025.

- This past year, DOI restructured the Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD (OIG-NYPD) and filled positions that had remained vacant for too long. I am pleased to share with this Committee that in 2025 DOI hired nine new staff members for this unit, and it currently operates with an active headcount of ten. The budget provides sufficient funding for only two of the five open positions in this unit and DOI plans to hire for an Assistant Inspector General position and the Inspector General position, which we hope to fill once the new DOI Commissioner arrives. The unit will soon issue two reports that are mandated by the Council: its annual report and the fourth annual report regarding NYPD's compliance with the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act that will focus on the NYPD's use of facial recognition technology. These two reports join the 13 reports that the unit has produced since January 2022 despite the serious staffing challenges it faced during that time.
- DOI has been actively working to amend State law that currently precludes DOI from being able to meaningfully exercise independent oversight over ACS's handling of child abuse and neglect investigations or its operation of the City's juvenile detention facilities. DOI thanks Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi and Senator Jabari Brisport for their attention to this critical issue and for carrying the legislation.
- And, DOI has completed and closed all pending background investigations that were part of a nearly 6,500-case backlog identified in 2019, thereby completely eliminating the backlog.

DOI's Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget

Let me turn to DOI's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Preliminary Budget, which is \$54.1 million: The total is comprised of \$30.5 million for Personal Services (PS) and \$23.6 million for Other Than Personal Services (OTPS), which is largely made up of non-discretionary expenditures such as our rental obligation and integrity monitorships. At the start of FY27, as it has in previous years, DOI anticipates receiving an additional \$1.7 million dollars in Intra-City funds from other agencies that support a portion of our staffing. The total FY27 budget will support an anticipated 451 employees - 309 funded through DOI's budget and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) arrangements. The remaining 142 staff represent employees directly funded by other City agencies and public authorities, including NYCHA and NYC Health + Hospitals.

DOI has also made significant progress in reducing its vacancy rate, which is the lowest it has been in recent years because we have ensured that open, funded positions are immediately posted, and that identifying potential candidates occurs swiftly. Currently, DOI has an 11 percent vacancy rate for its budgeted headcount, significantly lower than in Fiscal Year 2024 when our vacancy rate was about 17 percent.

I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight how DOI's capacity has been reduced over the past five fiscal years, particularly relative to the size of the City's workforce and the City's budget with which we remain tasked with overseeing. Just six fiscal years ago, in Fiscal Year 2021, DOI's Preliminary Budget was \$58.2 million. This year, DOI's Preliminary Budget is only \$54.1 million, even as both salaries and expenses have continued to rise. In Fiscal Year 2021, DOI had an active headcount of 525 staff, including both DOI-funded and on-loan employees. This year, DOI has an active headcount of just 417. As of today, there are 108 fewer DOI professionals conducting oversight of the City and its vendors, even as the City's budgeted workforce has remained relatively stable and the Preliminary Budget has increased from \$95.3 billion to \$127 billion over the same period. Former Commissioner Jocelyn Strauber repeatedly testified over the past few years about the strain that these cuts have put on our agency and our existing staff to the detriment of the City, and I reiterate that point today.

Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) Request

For the FY27 Executive Budget, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed an OTPS PEG of \$664,000 in FY26 and \$1.1 million in FY27 and the outyears. An OTPS PEG of this size is not reasonable for DOI. DOI's City tax levy funded OTPS budget totals \$23.1 million in FY26 and \$23.6 million in FY27. That

funding pays for DOI's \$18.5 million rental obligation and \$4.4 million for two integrity monitorships. These are non-discretionary expenses that DOI has no ability to reduce. That leaves only approximately \$200,000 in discretionary OTPS funding that could be used to satisfy the PEG. DOI has requested – repeatedly - that its non-discretionary OTPS funding be exempted from the PEG, but this request has not yet been approved.

OMB is also proposing a PS PEG in the form of a 50% vacancy reduction in FY26 and beyond and a one-time PS reduction of \$478,000 in FY26. This would reduce DOI's budgeted headcount by 13 lines at a time when we are already struggling with insufficient headcount. DOI has similarly requested an exemption from the PS PEG, but to date that request has not been approved.

As the Council is aware, unlike other agencies, DOI's budget goes solely to support mission critical expenses. DOI does not operate discretionary programs that could be scaled back or eliminated to satisfy the continuous PEGs. Except for the approximately \$200,000 in discretionary OTPS funding I just referenced, DOI's entire City tax levy funded budget goes to support staff salaries, rent, and contracted integrity monitorships for two citywide projects.

New Needs Requests

In advance of the release of the FY27 Preliminary Budget, DOI submitted a new needs request to OMB. Only one of our requests was funded in the budget, namely \$600,000 for DOI's lease obligations. Let me outline some of our high-priority requests, which remain unfunded:

1. 9-11 Mandated Investigation Funding

In July 2025 the City Council passed Resolution No. 560-A, directing DOI to ascertain the knowledge mayoral administrations had about environmental toxins produced by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and to submit a report to Council by July 2027.

As the Council was considering this Resolution, DOI explained that given the volume and scope of such an examination, DOI would need funding to hire a team of investigators, attorneys and experts to properly conduct the investigation. To that end, DOI has requested \$3 million in funding in FY27 to hire an outside firm with the essential expertise that DOI will manage. Based on the responses we received to our Request for Information (RFI) DOI now estimates that the cost of the overall investigation will total between \$4 and \$5 million and we will be submitting a revised request to OMB.

2. Additional Staffing Requests

DOI requested \$1.1 million in new baselined PS funding to support 17 additional headcount. The new headcount is needed to allow DOI to add specialized staff to its ranks, specifically auditors, data analysts, and background investigators. This funding also includes the hiring of seven entry-level investigators to better support our current investigative squads, and \$130,000 to hire two operational support staff in our procurement and budget offices.

3. Hiring, Retention and Restoration

DOI has worked hard to recruit and retain its staff, particularly during the budgetary cuts over recent fiscal years in which the City's 2-for-1 hiring freeze created a severe burden on the current staff.

To accomplish this critical staffing effort, DOI leveraged existing vacancy funding to revise the salary structure for our investigative titles, which experienced some of the highest attrition rates in the agency's recent history and which established a viable path for young investigators who desired promotional opportunities within the agency. As a result, 14 positions were defunded and DOI has requested that those positions, totaling \$1.4 million, be restored.

4. Critical Software and Hardware Updates

DOI has requested a little over \$1 million to cover ongoing maintenance and technical support that has increased significantly from Fiscal Year 2024 and to continue the process of updating and replacing aging technology. In past years, DOI has leveraged state and federal asset forfeiture to supplement our needs in this area but at the current rate of spending, forfeiture reserves are projected to be depleted by FY 28.

Let me provide some background on how we receive forfeiture funding and the legal rules for using it. Forfeiture funding is intended to supplement DOI's resources and expand its investigative capacities, not to pay for ordinary expenditures that should be appropriately funded by the City.

DOI receives forfeiture from its criminal investigations. Both federal and state laws provide for the seizure of assets that are connected to criminal activity and the subsequent sharing of those funds with the investigating agencies responsible for the investigation. Forfeiture funds must be used to support legitimate law enforcement activities. The majority of our forfeiture funds come from federal prosecutions and there are very strict Department of Justice Guidelines on how forfeiture funds can be used and for what purposes. The DOJ guidelines require that forfeiture funds supplement, not supplant, DOI's budget. This means the City cannot reduce DOI's budget due to the availability of forfeiture funds.

Investigations do not always result in forfeiture funding to DOI and there is no way to predict how much forfeiture DOI will receive during any given year.

I want to take a moment to say that it has been an honor to serve as DOI's Acting Commissioner. Everyone at DOI is looking forward to the arrival of our new Commissioner under whose leadership we will continue to provide the independent oversight that has been the hallmark of DOI's work as New York City's Inspector General.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.



Department of Investigation

Calendar Year **2025**



\$5.07M

in savings for the City recovered as a result of DOI's Asylum Seeker Monitorship



174

arrests



\$6M+

in total financial recoveries collected for the city



1,402

active caseload of investigations

2025 Investigative Highlights:

- Strengthening Safety of Young People Under City Care
- Combatting Crimes that Undermine Essential Needs: Housing and Wages
- Tackling Criminal Conduct and Contraband Smuggling in the City's jails
- Protecting Public Funds
- Conducting Complex Investigations

In CY 2025, DOI:



Issued

14 Public Reports

Complaints:

12,979

complaints in CY 2025

DOI Referrals:



153

matters referred for criminal prosecution

Investigations:

843

opened investigations

1,192

closed investigations

Read on for the full overview of 2025 statistics.

More Information At:

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

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**DOI CALENDAR YEAR 2025 BY THE NUMBERS: 174 ARRESTS, AN ACTIVE CASELOAD OF 1,402 INVESTIGATIONS;
AND MORE THAN \$6 MILLION IN FINANCIAL RECOVERIES COLLECTED FOR THE CITY**

Christopher Ryan, Acting Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the agency's 2025 Calendar Year-end ("CY") accomplishments today, which reflect an array of investigations, public reports, and policy and procedure recommendations that involve fraud and corruption impacting the City. These investigations held individuals and contractors accountable for corruption-related crimes and strengthened internal controls to prevent similar misconduct in the future. While several of DOI's indicators decreased from the previous year, in particular arrests, criminal referrals to prosecutors, and active investigations; others increased, including the number of closed investigations, financial recoveries collected for the City as a result of DOI investigations, and the number of City employees trained through our corruption prevention e-learning outreach efforts.

Acting DOI Commissioner Christopher Ryan said, "DOI is a factfinding agency whose investigations protect public funds; uncover corruption-related crimes that undercut critical needs such as housing and wages; and lead to improved City policies and operations. Over the past several years, DOI has conducted complex investigations focused on a number of high-level City officials that required a significant number of staff and resources. Our investigations in 2025 reflect the agency's broad caseload and impact, which continued even as DOI contended with a 12 percent reduction in staff due to budget cuts over the past four years. As the City grapples with a substantial budget deficit, DOI's work to safeguard taxpayer dollars and benefits, return stolen dollars to the City, and strengthen processes to close corruption gaps is even more crucial. I thank DOI's hard-working staff for their commitment to preserving integrity in the City; and I am grateful for our strong partnerships with state and federal prosecutors who work alongside us to advance DOI's anti-corruption mission."

In CY 2025, DOI:

- Issued 14 public reports.
- Made 174 arrests, approximately 53% fewer than in 2024, when DOI made 372* arrests.
- Received 12,979 complaints, approximately 12% fewer than the 14,817* received in CY 2024.
- Saved the City \$5.07 million in public funds that were recovered as a result of DOI's Asylum Seeker Monitorship, which found an array of vendor invoicing errors such as mistaken double-billing, overpayment of advance deposits, and other overcharges and anomalies.
- Collected more than \$6 million in financial recoveries related to DOI investigations.
- Referred 153 investigations for criminal prosecution, an 8.4% decrease from the 167* referred in CY 2024. As of 2025, DOI now counts each investigation as a referral, where prior to 2025, DOI counted each individual subject referred as a unique referral. The number for CY 2024 has been updated to reflect that change and to ensure we have an exact comparison.
- Opened 843 investigations, a slight decrease from the 868 opened in CY 2024.
- Closed 1,192 investigations, a 37% increase from the 868 closed in CY 2024.

more

- Carried an active caseload of approximately 1,402, about 148 fewer than in CY 2024.
- Completed 51,518 vendor name checks for City agencies, which includes the vetting of companies, principals, AKA's and affiliates, 33% more than in CY 2024, when DOI completed 38,618.
- Trained approximately 21,650 City employees through our digital corruption-prevention module, an increase of more than 3,500 employees from CY 2024. A total of 37,106 employees and others were trained through the digital module and our in-person and virtual lectures.
- Conducted 246 in-person and virtual corruption prevention lectures, about 10% fewer than the 273 conducted in 2024. While taking significant staff time and resources, this initiative is an important point of contact between DOI and City employees.
- Issued 113 policy and procedure recommendations ("PPRs"), about 64% fewer than in CY 2024 when DOI issued 311 PPRs.
- Closed all pending background investigations that were part of a nearly 6,500-case backlog identified in 2019 thereby eliminating the backlog completely.
*The CY 2024 number was updated from the previous year's release.

Below are highlights of DOI's investigations and accomplishments from CY 2025. Please click on each of the section headlines to see the related press releases to the cases mentioned.

[Established the Protest Response Oversight Unit \(PRO\)](#)

DOI established the Protest Response Oversight Unit ("PRO") and began overseeing the New York City Police Department's ("NYPD") response to certain protests, as agreed to in the City's settlement of [In Re: New York City Policing During Summer 2020 Demonstrations](#), No. 20-CV-8924(CM)(GWG) (S.D.N.Y. 2023). "Phase II" of the settlement agreement is underway, and DOI's PRO Unit is reviewing NYPD's response to two protests selected by the Plaintiffs in that litigation: the protest at Brooklyn College on May 8, 2025, and the protest at 26 Federal Plaza on June 14, 2025. The Plaintiffs include the New York State Attorney General's Office and individuals who brought complaints involving their treatment during Summer 2020 protests, represented by organizations including the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Legal Aid Society. If you have witnessed conduct of concern involving NYPD at these or other protests that you would like to share, you can provide information to the PRO Unit using this [Online Portal](#) or call the PRO Unit's hotline at: 212-825-6854.

[Issued 14 Public Reports](#)

DOI's public reports provide a view into the agency's investigations and findings and, where relevant, lay out recommendations to strengthen policies and procedures to prevent the problems from reoccurring in the future. These reports are posted to [DOI's public website](#), providing essential transparency regarding DOI's investigations and government operations. In 2025, DOI 14 publicly issued reports included [An Assessment of NYPD's Use of Social Media](#); [DOI's Findings Regarding "Skimming" of Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards that Provide Vital Funds to Low-Income New Yorkers and Related Recommendations](#); an [Investigation into a Department of Correction \("DOC"\) Intelligence Bureau Investigator Assisting Federal Agents with Immigration Enforcement](#) and an [Investigation into NYPD's Compliance with Local Laws Restricting City Assistance with Immigration Enforcement](#); an [Investigation of Excessive Workers' Compensation Claims by DOC Employees](#); [A Review of Select Safety Measures at Senior New York City Housing Authority \("NYCHA"\) Buildings](#), and investigative findings on the [New York City Conflicts of Interest Board's Advisory Opinion and Moonlighting Waiver Practices](#).

[Conducted Complex Investigations](#)

In CY 2025, announcements on significant investigations on which DOI worked with our prosecuting partners included:

- The indictment of former Mayor Adams's chief advisor and eight other co-defendants in an alleged bribery conspiracy case.
- The conviction on bribery, fraud or extortion offenses of all 70 employees of the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") charged in a February 2024 sweep, which touched on almost one-third of NYCHA's 365 developments in each of the five boroughs.
- The sentencing of two former chiefs in the Fire Department to prison terms for providing expedited plan reviews and priority inspections in return for bribes.
- Three DOC Correction Officers who were charged with an alleged years-long healthcare fraud scheme following use of force incidents on Rikers Island.

Protected Public Funds

DOI regularly investigates fraud and theft allegations involving public funds, uncovering a variety of schemes as well as conduct that compromised City processes and services. In CY 2025, subjects of these investigations included:

- A former CEO and a business partner at a City-funded nonprofit homeless services provider who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the City of millions of dollars.
- A former fiscal officer for a City-funded Brooklyn charity who was sentenced to 21 months' imprisonment for embezzlement.
- A Queens man pleaded guilty to accepting over \$3,000 from two undercover DOI investigators posing as City Taxi and Limousine Commission ("TLC") license candidates in exchange for helping them cheat on a TLC licensing exam.
- A Brooklyn man who pleaded guilty and was sentenced to five days of community service and ordered to pay \$7,774 in restitution, the amount he stole by using a "Bot" program to answer hundreds of online health surveys that generated thousands of dollars in electronic gift card funds from the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH").
- Principals of a fire alarm maintenance company who pleaded guilty and were sentenced to prison time for a decade-long scheme to defraud multiple City agencies by overbilling those agencies using fabricated invoices with fraudulently inflated prices and shell companies.
- Four individuals who pleaded guilty to conspiracies to misappropriate funds of a nonprofit organization serving the City's homeless through two separate schemes to authorize payments worth millions of dollars to vendors from which they then secretly profited.
- The president of a Queens-based construction company who was sentenced to 48 months in prison for a scheme to defraud the City in connection with homeless shelter contracts.
- The CEO of a New Jersey-based telecommunications construction company who was charged with commercial bribery, fraud, and witness tampering offenses.
- The founder and CEO of a City-funded nonprofit organization and two principals of the nonprofit's subcontractors who were charged with allegedly diverting tens of millions of dollars from a COVID-19 emergency housing program to enrich themselves through kickbacks and bribes.

Strengthened Safety of Young People Under City Care

DOI conducts investigations that impact the safety of children under the care of the City Administration for Children's Services ("ACS"), including its Division of Youth and Family Justice ("DYFJ"), as well as funds administered by ACS. In CY 2025, these investigations included:

- Several investigations at Crossroads Juvenile Center ("Crossroads") in Brooklyn, a secure juvenile detention facility under DYFJ, resulted in:
 - A former ACS Youth Development Specialist ("YDS") who was charged with allegedly bringing in contraband to juveniles at Crossroads in exchange for more than \$70,000.
 - Three ACS YDSs, including a supervisor, who were charged with allegedly conspiring to smuggle contraband into Crossroads.
 - Four former ACS YDSs were sentenced for participating in contraband smuggling at Crossroads, resulting in some receiving imprisonment, for accepting money in return for bringing in drugs, razor blades, marijuana, tobacco, pills and alcohol.
- A Bronx day care operator who was charged with allegedly stealing over \$29,000 in public day care funds by falsely representing to ACS that two children had attended the Bronx in-home day care when, in fact, they had not attended.
- A Bronx man who was charged with allegedly stealing \$38,471 in adoption subsidies administered by ACS. The investigation was prompted by ACS's notification to DOI that the legitimate recipient of the subsidies reported she had not received the checks. The defendant pleaded guilty in November 2025 to Petit Larceny and was sentenced in January 2026 to three years' probation, 50 days of community service, and \$10,000 in restitution.
- An ACS Associate YDS was sentenced to time served and two years' post release supervision in connection with the assault of a 16-year-old resident at Horizon Juvenile Center in the Bronx.

In addition to these investigations, DOI is working with Senator Jabari Brisport and Assembly Member Andy Hevesi on [S.8205/A.8248](#) to amend a State law that currently precludes DOI from being able

to meaningfully exercise independent oversight over ACS's handling of child abuse and neglect investigations or its operation of the City's juvenile detention facilities, among other things.

Combatted Crimes that Undermine Essential Needs: Housing and Wages

Tenant harassment, wage theft, and the theft of affordable housing and rental benefits are crimes that threaten New Yorkers' ability to meet critical needs. In CY 2025, DOI's investigations in this area included:

- The indictment of landlords on charges of allegedly harassing two older, rent-regulated tenants in Chelsea, resulting in these tenants frequently living without heat for extended periods each winter, including a heat outage in 2021 that lasted from mid-January to early March, including other uninhabitable conditions.
- A Bronx man who was charged with allegedly creating and selling fraudulent financial documents to individuals claiming to seek affordable housing in New York City pleaded guilty to a felony.
- A Section 8 recipient who was charged with allegedly failing to live in her subsidized Bronx apartment and illegally subletting and profiting from it.
- A Queens couple pleaded guilty to federal charges in connection with a public benefits scam that included providing false information about their income and the type and number of residences they owned in order to obtain public benefits they were not entitled to receive, from three public benefits programs.
- Two separate wage theft cases that resulted in guilty pleas by a master rigger and, separately, a construction company owner who worked on a job site under a City Housing Preservation and Development contract; and the return of stolen wages to victimized workers in these cases. The master rigger was sentenced to six months in jail, five years of probation, and 100 hours of court supervised community service; and separately the construction company owner agreed to a voluntary debarment from City-funded construction projects for three years. In a third, separate matter, an investigation secured \$400,000 for underpaid City school security guards.
- A former prosecutor, her brother and her mother who pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining affordable housing in Manhattan.

Investigated Wrongdoing by City Employees

Below are highlights of DOI investigations in CY 2025 involving City employees:

- A former fraud investigator with the City Department of Homeless Services and another individual who were sentenced to prison for stealing homeless victims' identities to apply for unemployment benefits.
- A NYCHA supervisor who was charged with alleged time theft in connection with working an unauthorized side job on City time.
- A City Health + Hospitals ("H+H") Behavioral Health Associate who was charged with alleged felony assault of a patient.
- A former Department of Environmental Protection employee who was indicted for allegedly stealing \$275,000 from a former 78-year-old co-worker disabled by strokes.
- A City H+H Engineer who pleaded guilty to stealing nearly \$22,000 in wages.
- A former Department of Finance employee who pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining thousands of dollars in real estate tax refunds.
- A former Board of Elections employee and Bronx District leader who pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 24 months in prison on federal extortion and mail fraud charges.
- An employee with the New York City Employees' Retirement System who pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one to three years in prison for stealing pension checks valued at \$624,000 from two retired individuals.
- A former HRA Eligibility Specialist who was charged with allegedly stealing personal information from a client to illegally obtain unemployment benefits.
- A City Sanitation supervisor who was indicted for filing \$21,000 in fraudulent timesheets.

Tackled Criminal Conduct and Contraband Smuggling by DOC Employees

DOI investigates allegations of criminal conduct, including contraband smuggling, on Rikers Island. In CY 2025, these investigations included:

- A jury convicted a City Department of Correction Officer ("CO") for planting a makeshift weapon in a Rikers Island cell and the defendant was later sentenced to 90 days in jail.

- A former CO who was charged with allegedly filing phony documentation for medical treatment and pleaded guilty as part of a plea agreement that included a sentence to a conditional discharge and a \$500 fine and, in a separate case, a DOC Captain who was convicted of stealing \$14,000 in pay who was ordered to pay fines and restitution and whose pension was reduced.
- A former DOC employee who was indicted on tax fraud charges for allegedly failing to report more than \$135,000 that she received from associates of inmates.
- A CO who was sentenced to a conditional discharge for falsifying suicide prevention training for 74 officers.
- A CO convicted of misconduct and reckless endangerment for failing to act in an 18-year-old inmate's suicide attempt was sentenced to probation and community service.
- A former DOC civilian Program Counselor who was charged with and pleaded guilty to accepting bribes to smuggle contraband into Rikers Island. He was sentenced in January 2026 to three months' imprisonment.
- A former CO who was sentenced to six months in prison for accepting bribes to smuggle narcotics into Rikers Island.
- A former CO who was sentenced to one year and one day in prison for conspiring to smuggle drugs and other contraband into Rikers Island.

Protected the Public's Safety

In CY 2025, DOI conducted a number of investigations that protected the public's safety, such as:

- The conviction of two licensed pharmacists who participated in a scheme to use illegal medical prescriptions to obtain oxycodone for sale on the streets of New York City and who were each sentenced to prison for these offenses.
- A sham construction safety training school and its president pleaded guilty to Attempted Enterprise Corruption, Offering a False Instrument, and Reckless Endangerment and were sentenced to one year in jail, 100 hours of community service and the forfeiture of \$100,000. The company lost its security license. A total of 22 defendants associated with this case have pleaded guilty or been found guilty after trial.
- A Brooklyn man who was sentenced to six months in jail for making and selling fake safety and training certifications to New York City construction workers who never received the required training.
- DOI worked with the Department of Buildings ("DOB") and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office on DOB's final investigative report on the 2023 Ann Street fatal parking structure collapse finding the collapse was attributed primarily to unsafe demolition work on the 98-year-old building.

Complaints and Intakes

In CY 2025, DOI received communications from the public and other individuals through various mechanisms, including: 132 walk-in complainants; 304 complaints received via traditional mail; 6,003 via email; 5,304 complaints received via DOI's online complaint system (1,982 of which were duplicate submissions from one complainant) and includes referrals through the 311 system; and 3,122 complaints received via phone.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

DOI's press releases can also be found at twitter.com/NYC_DOI
Know something rotten in City government? Help DOI Get the Worms Out of the Big Apple.
 Call: 212-3-NYC-DOI or email: Corruption@DOI.nyc.gov



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony before the City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations
City Hall – March 18, 2026

Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027

Good afternoon, members of the New York City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations. My name is Ben Weinberg, and I am the Director of Public Policy at Citizens Union. Citizens Union is a nonpartisan good government group working to ensure honest and accountable government, fair and open elections, and a civically engaged public.

We congratulate Council Member Shekar Krishnan on his appointment as chair of this important committee and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

We urge the Council to provide increased funding in the FY2027 budget for the city's ethics and anti-corruption watchdogs beyond the levels proposed in the mayor's preliminary budget. This includes both the Department of Investigation (DOI), which is the subject of today's hearing, and the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB), which does not receive a dedicated budget oversight hearing.

Both DOI and COIB experienced budget reductions, funding freezes, and significant attrition under the previous administration. Yet Mayor Mamadni's preliminary budget keeps their funding largely flat compared with the most recent financial plan. The need to ensure a clean and ethical government, however, has not remained flat. If anything, it has grown in the wake of the ethical misconduct that marked the previous administration. As the size and complexity of city government—and its budget—continue to increase, so too must the capacity of the agencies responsible for safeguarding its integrity.

Recent years have demonstrated why these agencies must be adequately resourced to function as truly independent watchdogs. As DOI and COIB pursued matters involving City Hall officials, they were affected by Office of Management and Budget refusals to authorize the filling of vacancies. The former DOI commissioner suggested that requests for support received limited response as investigations involving City Hall became public.¹

A charter commission appointed by the City Council last year recognized these challenges and the need to strengthen the capacity of both agencies, including addressing chronic staffing reductions and

¹ Greg Smith, THE CITY, 01/22/2026. Adams Hired Her. She Probed Him. Mamdani Let Her Leave <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/01/22/jocelyn-strauber-doi-department-investigation-exit-interview-eric-adams/>

ensuring sufficient funding for non-salary expenses. The Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy recommended in its final report that the budgets of DOI and COIB be increased and protected, setting minimum funding levels of 0.06 percent and 0.0035 percent of the city's total budget, respectively.

The agencies' FY2027 budget requests are more modest than those recommended levels, and we urge the Council to include them in its budget response.

We support DOI's request for 17 new full-time positions to assist with investigations, background checks, and operations. These additions would bring DOI to a total of 326 full-time employees—still significantly below the 408 positions in FY 2020. DOI also requires additional OTPS funding to keep pace with technological developments. In addition, a recent Council resolution directing DOI to investigate what the city knew about Ground Zero toxins following the September 11 attacks will likely require further resources (Reso. 560-2024).

At the same time, DOI's workload has increased significantly. The number of complaints received, arrests made, and cases referred for prosecution has risen in recent years, even as staffing levels have declined. This strain is reflected in the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report metrics: the time required to complete investigations increased from an average of 201 days in FY2023 to 251 days in FY2025, and to 325 days in the first four months of FY2026; the average time to complete a background investigation increased to 117 days in the first four months of this fiscal year, compared to 109-day average during the first four months of FY2025.

We also support restoring COIB's staffing levels. In January 2022, COIB had a staff of 26; today it has only 20, with approval to fill two vacancies that would bring the total to 22. The mayor's proposed budget keeps funding flat at \$2.86 million, effectively returning COIB to the same budget level it had prior to the Adams administration, despite substantial growth in the city's overall budget and the effects of inflation. The widening gap between the scale of city government and the small agency responsible for enforcing its ethics laws poses a real risk to maintaining a clean and honest government.

COIB should receive sufficient funding to restore its staffing to 26 positions. This would allow the Board to better support the city workforce by strengthening its advice, education, and legal units. Adequate funding is also necessary to retain experienced staff. In an agency of COIB's size, retention is critical to preserving institutional knowledge and maintaining operational integrity.

Looking ahead, we also strongly support establishing charter-protected minimum funding levels for both DOI and COIB to help ensure their independence and stability over time. We urge the Council to continue advancing the reforms proposed by its own Charter Revision Commission. These thoughtful measures should be placed on the ballot, either by the Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy or as part of any future mayoral Charter Revision Commission.

Investing in oversight agencies is an investment in a more efficient and effective city government. DOI investigations alone resulted in more than \$6 million in financial recoveries last year and helped generate millions more in savings through oversight of contracts, vendors, and procurement processes. COIB trains tens of thousands of city employees each year, helping ensure that those entrusted with public resources do not misuse their authority.

For these reasons, we urge the City Council to ensure that DOI and COIB receive the resources necessary to effectively carry out their critical oversight responsibilities.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chris Ryan

Address: Acting Commissioner

I represent: DO I

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ben Weinberg

Address: _____

I represent: Citizens Union

Address: _____

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