



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

**Testimony of
Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner
New York City Police Department**

**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety**

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025
9:30 A.M.**

New York City Police Department's FY2026 Preliminary Budget

Good morning Chair Salaam and members of the City Council Committee on Public Safety. I am Jessica Tisch, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). I am joined at the table today by First Deputy Commissioner Tania Kinsella, Deputy Commissioner for Management and Budget Kristine Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters Michael Gerber, as well as other members of my executive staff. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the NYPD's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget.

I have come before this body previously as commissioner of both the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications and the Department of Sanitation, and it is my great honor to now share with you the remarkable work of the women and men of the New York City Police Department.

Public safety is the most fundamental obligation a government has to its people, and the police are the keepers of that promise. But to do this, a law enforcement agency needs one thing above all else: the public trust. And it begins with strong, ethical leadership.

In my career, I have set high standards for myself, and for those who work with and for me. And I have been very candid that I expect all members of my executive team to rise to meet these high standards, and to always lead with unimpeachable integrity. So immediately upon taking this job, I began a full review of the department. We would enhance what was working well, and fix what was not.

Over the past three months, we have made more than a dozen changes to our top leadership, matching the right skills and experience with the right roles. We overhauled the Internal Affairs Bureau, both in leadership and personnel. We returned about 1,000 cops from administrative roles back to patrol – including the rightsizing of our Public Information bureau by reducing its uniformed headcount by about 35%. We amended the NYPD's vehicle pursuit policy to give our officers clearer guidance and smarter protocols. And we initiated system-wide changes to our overtime policies, designed to prevent misuse and to ensure compliance with NYPD regulations.

Overtime continues to be an essential and critical tool in maintaining public safety as it allows for additional deployments when and where they are most needed, including to reduce crime and staff



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

unplanned events. While an essential part of our budget, it is paramount that overtime be actively managed and that there is strict accountability for its use.

I have a track record for taking overtime management seriously, as evidenced by my time as Sanitation Commissioner. Under my tenure there, my team and I reduced overtime spending by nearly 30% between fiscal years 2023 and 2024 – which exceeded even OMB's target.

I am continuing this focus on efficient and appropriate use of overtime at the NYPD, and early results of the Overtime Management Plan are favorable. First, some context: The NYPD's current overtime budget is \$685.7 million, whereas the average overtime spend for the past five fiscal years, once adjusted for collective bargaining, was \$912 million per year – about \$227 million above our current overtime budget. It is important that we are comparing apples to apples here, because the same dollar of overtime today costs more than it did previously. And for years, the budget has had no connection to reality, with significant incremental adjustments being made throughout the year. All that said, we are spending far too much money on overtime in the NYPD.

In the first half of fiscal year 2025, the department spent \$615.7 million on overtime, an increase of 10.8% compared to the same timeframe last fiscal year. At that pace, we were on course to spend \$1.23 billion for fiscal year 2025, a 12.7% increase over fiscal year 2024. Then, on January 1st, I put very clear overtime controls in place for uniformed members – and did the same on February 1st for civilian members.

I am pleased to say that in the month of January 2025, we turned the tide and the department's overtime spending is down nearly 11% from January of last year, saving \$8.3 million. And that trend continued last month, with February overtime spending down 10% compared to last February, saving \$7.3 million.

This reduction is despite multiple headwinds, including lower staffing levels and increased resources in the transit system, especially on the overnight. Overall, with this renewed focus and enhanced compliance measures, we anticipate that we will continue to see reduced overtime compared to the first half of the fiscal year.

Including the additional transit overtime, we are currently projecting to spend \$100 million less compared to what the department was on pace to spend if the levels from the first half of the fiscal year had continued unchecked.

And let me be clear: None of this has come at the expense of public safety.

In 2024, overall index crime was down, with more than 3,600 fewer incidents reported than the previous year. Murders were at a five-year low. Both shooting incidents and shooting victims were down for the third straight year citywide – and in Brooklyn, shootings were at their lowest levels since CompStat began tracking them in the early 1990s. Major crime was down in our housing developments, and it was down in our transit system for the second straight year.

This was certainly movement in the right direction, but we knew that we could and must do more.

There were still stubborn pockets of violence in the city, and there was a sense that people still did not feel safe. So we wasted no time in building on, and enhancing, our efforts to further drive down crime. And that work has led to a meaningful course correction.

Major crime in February was down nearly 15%, marking the third straight month of double digit declines in citywide index crime – after a 16% drop in December, and a 17% drop in January. So far in 2025, overall crime is down more than 14%, with six out of the seven index categories seeing significant declines. Year-to-date crime is down across every city borough, it is down 11% in housing, and it is down 27% in our subways.

We continue to make great progress against gun violence, with citywide shooting incidents down another 21% from last year. We have seized more than 20,800 illegal firearms since Mayor Adams took office – and long-term investigations alongside DAs from Brooklyn and Queens resulted in the removal of dozens more illegal guns from our streets, and in the arrests of the violent criminals who use them.

The result was the fewest shootings of any January in recorded history, and we set a record by going five straight days without a single shooting anywhere in the city that month. February continued that trend – and we now have the lowest number of year-to-date shooting incidents since record keeping began more than 30 years ago. On top of this, year-to-date retail theft is down; misdemeanor assaults are down; and in just two months, the NYPD has already taken more than 1,000 illegal guns off our streets.

Our roadways are also getting significantly safer – and the work of our 2,900 Traffic Enforcement Agents is saving lives. In 2025, citywide traffic fatalities are down 30% (to their lowest level in four years), total collisions are down by more than 16%, and traffic-related injuries are down 20%. Every single collision category – from pedestrians, to bicycles, to e-bikes – is lower this year compared to 2024. NYPD Traffic Agents are doing a remarkable job in the most densely populated city in the nation, and our streets are much safer as a result.

All of this to show that New York City remains the safest big city in America. But one major crime category is running counter to all others, and that is rape. Compared to 2024, reported rapes have increased by 27%. And although this may seem counterintuitive, this is a clear sign that our work to seek justice for every victim of sexual and gender-based violence is making a real difference. For years, these crimes have been widely underreported, and more survivors coming forward means more ability for the police to get rapists off our streets.

Beginning in spring 2024, NYPD detectives began taking reports of sexual assault at the city's five borough-based Family Justice Centers, where survivors were already receiving social and legal services in a safe space. Now, they can come forward with the support of trusted advocates and providers, and receive the critical resources they need to heal. We encourage all survivors to make their voices heard, so that the police can hold these criminals accountable.

Simply put, the overall crime reductions the women and men of the NYPD have delivered over the past three months have been extraordinary. If 2024 was a step in the right direction, then 2025



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

has so far been a leap forward. So how are we doing this?

We had to reimagine how the police department viewed and analyzed crime – and to do that we went back to the greatest innovation in policing over the last century: CompStat.

When CompStat was developed in the early 1990s, my mentor, Commissioner Bratton, was thinking about crime at the precinct level. But the average police precinct in New York City is quite large, and each one varies widely in size, population, and land use. What was working in Midtown might not apply to Mott Haven. And 30 years ago, the data was less detailed, and the process less defined.

Now, though, with more powerful analytic tools and the capability for more sophisticated evaluation, we can be more precise than ever. And we can extend the transformation that CompStat began through the establishment of “Zones.”

The idea is to focus on much smaller geographical areas than precincts – specific street segments, portions of neighborhoods, even stretches of blocks that cross precinct borders. Wherever we see increases in crime, we analyze those spikes, and those areas become our “zones” – hyper local, concentrated regions where we can maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of our deployments. These deployments are flexible, and can quickly adapt to shifting conditions through the use of our mobile field forces. The idea is quite literally to “flood the zone.” In a world with limited resources, you cannot flood the zone across a 4-square mile precinct – and you do not need to. But you can do that across 10 problematic blocks.

Every day, we are deploying about 650 additional officers to dozens of zones around the city. These deployments are not about targeting individuals, they are about combatting crime exactly where it is happening. This is a focused, location-based scalpel approach to crime – and the early returns are extremely encouraging.

Over the first ten weeks of 2025, major crime in our zones is down more than 28% overall, with a 50% reduction in shootings. This overall drop in crime includes a 37% decline in our 125th St. Zone in northern Manhattan, a 42% reduction in our Downtown Flushing Zone, and a 19% drop in crime in the White Plains Road Zone in the Bronx. And in our Roosevelt Avenue Zone, major crime is down 37% compared to last year.

Complex analysis establishes the zones, and then – just like they did in 1993 – we put the “cops on the dots.” It is a data-driven model based on straightforward logic: uniformed police presence drives down crime and disorder. And it is working above and below ground.

Every day, millions of people rely on New York City subways to get them where they need to go – and we know that the system will always be a bellwether for public safety in our city. Riders must be safe – and they must feel safe, too. That is why, among my first major initiatives as Police Commissioner, I announced a three-part Transit Safety Plan.

Part One began with optimizing our resources to ensure that our deployments were as effective

and efficient as possible. As a result of our analysis, more than 200 transit officers are assigned to daily, dedicated subway patrols in the highest crime stations in the system. And within those stations, our officers are posted away from the entrances and mezzanines, and on to the actual trains and platforms – where 78% of transit crime actually occurs.

Part Two was the reassignment of hundreds of officers from desk jobs and administrative work to transit patrol – which enables us to put two uniformed officers on every overnight train in the city. These cops are highly visible, and move from one car to the next addressing conditions as they encounter them.

Part Three is about the transit system's rules themselves – and it is a meaningful, systemic shift in how we approach policing in transit. Over the past ten years, prohibitions against taking up multiple seats, laying outstretched, smoking, drinking alcohol, etc. have not been consistently enforced. This increased the perception of an unsafe system – and it needed to change.

So we piloted that change in Transit District 20 in Queens, we have added Transit District 34 in Brooklyn, and we are looking to expand this program in the coming months. Our cops will not simply walk by someone who is violating the law and disrupting other passengers – we will correct the condition. And this is not just about enforcement. If a person is arrested, and they are unhoused, they are offered placement in a shelter. And if they accept the offer, the Department of Homeless Services will see that they are given a bed. We will also arrange for their transportation, if needed.

This is not a dragnet. This is not harassment. And this also is not about one person taking up two seats on a half-empty train. This is about restoring a sense of safety and order in the system. It is also a response to New Yorkers telling us that unchecked disorder makes them feel less safe on the train. And the truth is, this approach also allows the NYPD to address the random acts of violence we have seen in the subways.

Since this refocused enforcement began, about 32% of the encounters have resulted in an arrest, mostly because of open, active warrants. Of those people arrested, 31% were convicted felons. And all combined, they had nearly 3,600 prior arrests – which is an average of 20 per person. The early data from this transit plan is promising. So far this year, major crime in transit is down another 27% from 2024, and it is 44% below pre-pandemic levels. And with focused deployments and consistent enforcement, we expect these crime numbers to continue falling.

Our work in the transit system, on top of reducing crime and disorder, is also cognizant of the mental health crisis we are facing here, and in communities across our country. Our subways are not homeless shelters or psychiatric hospitals. At the local level with the PATH program, and the state level with the SCOUT program, we are working closely with our partners at the MTA, DHS, and Health & Hospitals to help people in need whom we encounter in the transit system.

This co-response initiative is part of our ongoing effort to connect people with shelter and care, and our interagency teams have made thousands of contacts over the past five months. While we have a moral duty to provide services, we cannot do this work alone. We require strong partners and even stronger ideas, and the NYPD stands with the Mayor and the Governor in their legislative



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

efforts to proactively address severe mental illness.

In New York City, it is clear that we do not have a surging crime problem – but we do have a surging recidivism problem.

Compared to 2018, 2024 saw an unacceptable rise in the number of individuals arrested three or more times for the same crime in the same year. The increase was 61% for burglary, 64% for shoplifting, 71% for grand larceny, 83% for robbery, and 119% for auto theft. And when we look at felony assault – an index crime that was up in 2024 – the increase was a staggering 147%.

So why is this happening? Among the reasons are changes to New York State laws enacted in 2020 that rendered our criminal justice system a high-speed revolving door – putting violent, repeat offenders back on our streets over and over.

As the Mayor and I have said: Your cops are out there doing their jobs, and in 2024 they made the most felony arrests in 26 years. But before they can even finish the paperwork, the person they arrested is back out on the street – immediately returned to the neighborhood, and the people, that they just victimized.

It is demoralizing. It is unsustainable. And it defies common sense.

And that's exactly the message I carried to Albany last month, specifically as it relates to changes to the discovery law. Ultimately, we must put the focus back on crime victims. I have been working closely with the Mayor on this, as well as the Governor and our five DAs. And last month I met with legislators in our state capitol to send them a direct message: We must do better.

We have been very clear on the specific changes that need to be made to the discovery law, and it is also important to know that the changes we have put forward in no way retreat from the underlying spirit of the criminal justice reforms of 2020 – including the notion that those accused deserve to see all the available, relevant evidence against them, and they should not be surprised by anything at the 11th hour.

But the 2020 reforms had unintended consequences that put the safety of New Yorkers at risk. And these unintended consequences have to be addressed.

Changing the criminal justice laws alone – while necessary – is insufficient. Too often, our prosecutorial partners decline cases or effectively dismiss cases through “Adjournments in Contemplation of Dismissal,” or “ACDs.” I have met individually with many of our DAs on this issue, and those productive discussions will continue so we can forge a safer path forward.

There is always room for improvement. Our DAs are our most important partners, and our work together undoubtedly makes our city safer. But any blanket policy that makes the revolving door spin faster must be reevaluated, and we have seen the effect of these policies for a while now. Toothpaste and laundry detergent locked up in cages on pharmacy shelves, mom-and-pop stores closing because they cannot recover from shoplifting losses, people brazenly stealing from our

retailers – really taking their time with it and calmly walking out of the store without a care in the world – all of this is at least in part due to the removal of serious consequences for certain misdemeanors.

I am channeling the voice of virtually every NYPD cop and everyday New Yorkers when I say: Enough is enough. Criminals in New York City – including violent, repeat offenders – continue to be given every courtesy. And the people of this city suffer as a result.

To be sure, crime and violence are major parts of the public-safety equation. But when residents, businesses, and tourists are plagued by issues like out-of-control scooters and e-bikes, aggressive panhandling, unruly street vending, public urination, open-air drug use, and more, it makes them feel unsafe. And it gives the impression of chaos and disorder. To address this, the NYPD is overhauling its approach to quality-of-life enforcement. And our plan – which will be finalized and implemented over the coming months – begins with the creation of the Quality of Life Division, headed by a new Chief of Quality of Life.

Instead of various units scattered throughout the department, we will have dedicated precinct officers assigned to newly formed Q-Teams. These teams will have strong, centralized leadership, and be specially trained to handle and resolve these issues. And we are also developing Q-Stat, which will track quality of life complaints the same way CompStat tracks crime complaints. Our Q-Stat meetings will keep us accountable, more accurately measure our effectiveness, and re-center our approach to public safety.

I want to be very straightforward about this: quality of life enforcement is based on community complaints. It is about listening to the people in our neighborhoods who are calling 311 and pleading for someone to come and help them. Over the past six years, those calls nearly doubled. From 2018 to 2024, complaints about illegal parking have gone up 202%. Noise complaints are up 119%. Calls about homeless encampments are up 557%. And complaints about panhandling have increased by 2,783%. New Yorkers are clearly demanding that something be done.

And make no mistake, this is not about zero tolerance policing, which can be dangerous and counterproductive. While correcting these conditions, officers will always have discretion – and discretion starts with engagement.

Over the past 30 years, CompStat has transformed how we police, with a focus on data-driven analysis and supervisory accountability. Now, we are using that same model with ComplianceStat. What began last year as monthly ComplianceStat meetings, will now occur every other week. At a ComplianceStat meeting, the borough leadership and commanding officers are grilled for three hours by senior department executives on a variety of compliance metrics.

Just as COs are called to the podium at CompStat to explain what they are doing in response to crime spikes, at ComplianceStat they have to explain body-worn-camera video where we have identified deficiencies, or compliance data showing that they are falling short. Half of ComplianceStat is devoted to investigative encounters, particularly the self-initiated stops by our specialty teams. For that portion of ComplianceStat, members of the monitor's team are in the



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

room, so that they can provide feedback and guidance.

When it comes to compliance, we have real work to do. Through ComplianceStat we are devoting the time, focus, and energy of the department to getting that work done.

ComplianceStat and Q-Stat are the latest accountability metrics in use in the NYPD, and they are the logical evolution of the CompStat revolution that began 32 years ago. Advancing and refining these models now gives us precise, real-time command of our work in three key areas: fighting crime, improving quality of life, and measuring our own performance. And our relentless focus on data integrity will usher in the next era of policing in New York City.

Also ahead for 2025, is a new training module which will expand our department's Crisis Intervention Training to include "ICAT": Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics. This evidence-based approach to de-escalation training is centered on the "critical decision-making model," and will teach our officers additional skills and tactics to better serve them in situations where someone is in mental distress.

The NYPD responds to about 180,000 such jobs every year, and they are some of the most challenging calls for service our officers handle. The safety of everyone involved depends on cops who are highly trained, well resourced, and exceptionally prepared, and this enriched training can save lives. We owe this to the public, and we owe this to our cops. We began this training with our newest academy class, and it will be rolled out across the department throughout this year.

The work of this department certainly makes our city safer, but we need more cops. And I will not sugar coat it: The NYPD is in a hiring crisis. This is not a budget problem – Mayor Adams has given us all the resources we need, and greenlit every class we wanted to bring in. But the applicants are just not there. It was not that long ago when people would wait years to get the call to join the Academy, and every incoming class was at capacity. Now, we are practically begging people to take the exam. And when they pass, we are scrambling to get them hired as quickly as possible. So, what happened?

First and foremost, we are still seeing the real impact of the "defund" and anti-police movement, which created a public discourse that devalued our officers and their profession. A lot of the rhetoric aimed at our police is vile, and the pendulum has swung too far away from what I consider to be the most important and noble job anyone could do. And we must swing it back.

Because it is quite simple: more cops on patrol make our city safer. In 2018, the NYPD had 37,000 uniformed officers for a city of more than 8 million people. Now, we have 33,000 – an 11% drop in headcount over 7 years. We need to bring that headcount up, and we started with the new class of more than 1,000 recruits sworn in two months ago. It was the largest recruit class in nearly a decade – but these much-needed additions are just the beginning. We know we have more work to do.

Part of that work is continually evaluating our staffing policies, and making changes to improve the way we recruit, hire, and train our officers. Previously, the NYPD required at least 60 college

credits to enter the Academy, which is a higher standard than most peer agencies who do not require any college at all. In 2023, this requirement led to the disqualification of 29% of NYPD applicants – meaning we turned away 2,275 potential officers. We could not afford to do that any longer.

So, in line with similar decisions Mayor Adams made last year to recruit more municipal workers, I made the difficult decision to reduce the credit requirement from 60 down to 24. At the same time, we have increased the college credits earned in the Police Academy from 36 to 45.

Along with increased academic rigor in the Academy, we raised the physical standards, as well. With the Mayor's support, we reinstated the mile-and-a-half run as a graduation requirement, putting more focus on our officers' health and fitness. I know these changes will allow the NYPD to recruit more quality candidates to serve as police officers, while increasing the physical standards and maintaining academic rigor that continue to surpass what most other police departments require.

At the end of the day, I want this to be a job that our officers are proud of, that their families are proud of, and one that they want to pass down to future generations. There was a time when policing was the family business – and it needs to be again.

As we go about our vital work keeping New Yorkers safe, I can promise you that the NYPD is going to follow the law – federal law, state law, city law, and the court orders that bind us. That means that we are not going to engage in civil immigration enforcement, period. That means that despite our objections to the “How Many Stops Act,” we will meet its requirements. That means that we will protect protesters' First Amendment right to speak, however hateful that speech may be. That means that we are recommitted to meeting the mandates of the Stop, Question, and Frisk monitorship – through ComplianceStat, through a Fourteenth Amendment compliance plan that was long overdue, and through the accountability and discipline that are warranted when we fall short.

The NYPD is not perfect. But we will hold ourselves to the highest standards of legality and integrity that befit the greatest police department in the world.

Now, I would like to turn to work the NYPD and City Council can do together. The perception among the police and public is that the Council has been legislating against us, but there is much we can do in concert. I look forward to discussing these many points of intersection with you, where our work can collectively benefit our shared public-safety interests.

For instance, we are taking a close look at measures to discuss with you that will dramatically improve New Yorkers' quality of life, such as possession of ATVs. ATVs cannot be legally operated on New York City roadways – but because ATV possession is legal, enforcement of the ATV laws is very challenging. The City Council should make it a misdemeanor to possess an ATV within the confines of the city.

As part of this shared work, we must move away from stances that negatively impact public safety

in our city. We need to have a candid dialogue – not in anger, but in honesty – about the effect that various laws have on the department’s work and on public safety. As you know, the Council has before it a bill that would ban the department’s criminal group database. That database is a critical intelligence tool that helps the NYPD save lives. If you want to work with us to improve the Database, by all means, let’s craft a bill together. But do not eliminate the Database. Doing so will hurt the department and will detract from public safety.

Whenever possible, we should be working together to enhance the safety and quality of life of every New Yorker. As leaders in city government, that is our job – and I am eager to partner with you on any policies and legislation that make our city stronger.

Now, turning to the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget and its impact on the NYPD in the coming fiscal year:

In totality, the NYPD’s Fiscal Year 2026 Expense Budget is \$6.15 billion, the vast majority of which – 92% – is allocated for personnel costs. The remaining 8% is dedicated to non-personnel costs, which include costs for: technology that provides officers with immediate access to critical data and applications; safety equipment; our response vehicles; and facilities.

We are grateful for the restoration in the November Financial Plan of our January and April 2025 police officer classes, as well as the additional new funding of \$181 million included as part of the Preliminary Financial Plan, which was for the following in the current fiscal year:

- \$117 million to partially address our structural overtime shortfall;
- \$55 million for the department’s Domain Awareness System and data plans for police officer smart phones;
- \$9 million for auto parts to ensure we can maintain the department fleet, including marked patrol and specialty vehicles such as ESU trucks.

In addition to the department’s operating budget, our Ten Year Capital Strategy includes \$1.55 billion for fiscal years 2025 through 2035. This funding is critical for:

- Facility construction projects (over \$698 million, or 45% of the capital budget) including a renovated firearms training facility;
- Communications and other information technology infrastructure (over \$428 million, or 28%);
- Large vehicle lifecycle replacement including ESU trucks, tow trucks, boats, and helicopters (\$385 million, or 25%).

During this capital plan, FY25 was reduced by \$50 million to account for updated project schedules. The department will continue to work with OMB to ensure funding is available to address all life safety systems, including communications equipment and facility improvements (boilers, HVAC, roof, and façade work).

While we have not yet felt any direct impact to our federal funding levels under the new

administration, we are closely monitoring any directives and changes regarding federal grants. Federal funding, while only making up 3% of our budget, covers critical functions within the department. On average, the NYPD receives just under \$200 million annually in new federal grant funding, with the majority coming from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The DHS grants enhance the Department's counter-terrorism capabilities, especially in the transit system and at our ports. These grant funds have allowed the department to: develop and sustain our sensor and information technology centerpiece, the Domain Awareness System, to support our counterterrorism mission; hire intelligence research specialists; deploy officers within the transit system and to strategic locations citywide based on intelligence; and train officers to respond to chemical, ordinance, biological, and radiological threats or incidents, as well as active shooter scenarios. Federal funds are critical to enhancing our ability to protect New York City residents and visitors, and our critical transportation and port infrastructure. The NYPD will continue to work closely with OMB to assess any potential impact on this critical funding stream.

I am a transparent, solutions-oriented person, and I have worked well with the Council in every role I have served in city government. Some of the most important work of my career has been done in partnership with councilmembers, and I hope and expect that will continue with you in my current role. My work with the Council has always been infused with a tone of mutual respect. That doesn't mean we will always agree – but when we disagree, I will always be very clear as to why. For the sake of all the people we serve, we must – and we will – work together.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and my staff and I look forward to answering your questions.



ERIC L. ADAMS
MAYOR

CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARD
100 CHURCH STREET 10th FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007 ♦ TELEPHONE (212) 912-7235
www.nyc.gov/ccrb



Dr. MOHAMMAD KHALID
INTERIM CHAIR

INTRODUCTION

Chairperson Salaam, members of the Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Dr. Mohammad Khalid, and I am the Interim Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board. I am joined today by the CCRB's Executive Director, Jonathan Darche. I served on the CCRB from 2005 to 2014 and was re-appointed by this Council in October 2024 as the Staten Island representative. In December, Mayor Eric Adams appointed me Interim Chair. I am here today to emphasize the critical importance of the CCRB to public safety in New York City and to address factors that underscore the Agency's need for adequate funding. These factors include a historic rise in complaints of alleged misconduct, expansion of the Agency's jurisdiction, and the responsibility to maintain high-quality investigations.

The CCRB provides civilians with a means to address police misconduct. We believe that public safety relies on an independent and robust system in which those in power are held accountable for their actions. Through thorough and impartial investigations, the CCRB amplifies New Yorkers' voices and ensures accountability is accessible to all. In 2024, the CCRB received our highest level of complaints in 12 years. This increase suggests that now, more than ever, New Yorkers are exercising their right to report police misconduct—a right celebrated in New York City since Mayor Dinkins created this all-civilian Board and Agency over 30 years ago. Today, I ask for your support to protect this right and, in doing so, invest in the safety of all New Yorkers.

FY26 BUDGET REQUEST

To function as a truly independent police oversight agency, the CCRB needs about \$44,540,521 million dollars and 397 personnel. This is \$16,909,167 million dollars and 150 positions more than allocated in last year's adopted budget. This amount represents just over 0.7% of the budget of the agency we are tasked with overseeing. For comparison, the NYPD's proposed budget is \$5.8 billion, with 35,000 uniformed officers. If our request is granted in full, the Agency would have one investigator for every 128 members of the NYPD.

HISTORIC RISE IN COMPLAINTS

In 2024, the CCRB received 5,709 complaints within our jurisdiction, the highest number in the past 12 years. This increase placed a significant strain on our already limited resources, hindering our ability to keep pace with investigations. In December 2023, the CCRB announced we would suspend investigating certain allegations within our jurisdiction as a last resort to preserve the quality of investigations. As a result, the Agency closed 22.5% of all complaints

without investigation in 2024. Despite constrained resources, the CCRB remains committed to serving New Yorkers through thorough and impartial inquiries into alleged abuses of power. However, we cannot resume these suspended investigations without sufficient funding.

EXPANSION OF JURISDICTION

This council has been instrumental in enacting meaningful changes in the CCRB's jurisdiction. For example, in 2018, this Council passed the Right to Know Act and in 2019, 74% of New Yorkers voted for a proposition granting the CCRB authority to investigate untruthful statements made to the CCRB. In 2021, this Council expanded the CCRB's jurisdiction to include allegations of racial profiling and bias-based policing. These changes improve accountability and ensure police misconduct is comprehensively addressed, but they also necessitate more resources. Allegations from the new areas of jurisdiction accounted for more than 13% of the allegations received in 2024. Over the years, the CCRB's responsibilities have grown significantly, while budget and staffing levels have not kept pace. The solution here is not to suspend these investigations, but to invest in the CCRB to ensure comprehensive civilian oversight.

QUALITY OF INVESTIGATIONS

As I mentioned, I previously served on the CCRB from 2005 to 2014. I was fortunate to rejoin the Agency in 2024, and, upon my return, I quickly began to appreciate the increased quality of investigations and work of this Agency. CCRB investigations were meticulous when I left, but I remain impressed by the advancements in technology and the enhanced training provided to investigators. For example, the use of body-worn camera footage has greatly improved the accuracy and scope of investigations. The rate at which complaints are closed as "Officer Unidentified" has decreased by 10 percentage points compared to the ten-year average before the use of BWC. Additionally, the percentage of complaints closed as "Unable to Determine" in 2024 was nearly 20 points lower than the average for the decade prior to the rollout of BWCs. However, while this technology increased efficacy, it also created additional workload. In 2024, the CCRB collected 7,530 hours of BWC footage. BWC footage includes audio and video of incidents that require meticulous and time-consuming review. To maintain the quality and timeliness of investigations, we need additional staffing to fully leverage these technological advancements.

BUDGET NEEDS BY TEAM

The steady increase in investigations over the past 12 years has made it difficult for investigators to meet the 18-month statute of limitations and shorten investigation timelines. We need 107 additional investigation personnel to handle the current workload. It is not enough to keep hiring new investigators, we need to retain the investigators we have. Last year, the promotion of qualified investigators from Level One to Level Two was delayed, and now, the promotions of four Level Two investigators to Level 3 are also delayed. The reason for this delay: the investigators haven't spent enough time at Level 2. Of course, this overlooks the fact that the reason these investigators don't have the time in title is that their promotions were

delayed for months. Without timely promotions and fair compensation, we risk losing many of our most experienced and talented investigative staff.

In 2012, the CCRB and the NYPD signed a memorandum of understanding which stated that the CCRB would prosecute cases of the highest level of misconduct, referred to as charges and specifications. This led to the creation the Administrative Prosecution Unit, which tries cases before an NYPD trial commissioner. In 2024, the APU, which only has 15 people, received 438 cases. To close these cases in a timely fashion and keep up with the growing docket, the APU needs to hire three more prosecutors and three more members of administrative staff.

When this Council passed the bill that empowered the CCRB to investigate racial profiling and bias-based policing, it agreed to fund the creation of a dedicated team to conduct these investigations. The CCRB previously testified before the Council that the Agency would need a team of at least 50 to conduct this crucial work properly as these complaints are extremely complicated in nature. To date, we have only been authorized to hire 20 people to do the work of 50. In 2024, the RPBP unit received 245 complaints. In December, the first case of this nature was tried by our Administrative Prosecution Unit. To continue to do this work and rise to the responsibility entrusted in us by this Council and the people of New York, we need sufficient budget and headcount to hire additional qualified investigators, attorneys, and data scientists.

The CCRB's Outreach team continues to connect with New Yorkers by fostering meaningful partnerships and building community trust, and in doing so, prioritizing diversity and equity. These initiatives display a holistic approach to outreach that involves creative methods of education and public service. Feedback from various communities highlights the importance of continuing efforts to raise awareness across all five boroughs, ensuring that New Yorkers understand the system of civilian oversight in their city and are informed about their rights when interacting with law enforcement. To do this, the Agency needs more outreach coordinators and additional budget to host events to maintain and enhance public education for New Yorkers.

To further raise awareness, we are asking for a significant investment in our advertising budget of one million dollars. Many New Yorkers remain unaware of the CCRB, which limits the Agency's effectiveness and reach, particularly in underserved communities. Targeted advertising campaigns would help bridge this gap by informing diverse demographics about their rights and how to file complaints. These funds will also ensure the Agency's ability to reach New Yorkers of all languages and accessibility levels. Additionally, this support would bolster the Agency's social media presence, a useful tool for both general awareness and investigations. Broadly speaking, increased visibility through advertising would strengthen public trust, encourage participation, and promote transparency in civilian oversight.

BOARD VACANCIES

Beyond budget concerns, Board vacancies also hinder agency function and case resolution. The city charter mandates a 15-member board appointed by this Council, the Mayor, the Public Advocate, and the Police Commissioner. Currently, four seats are vacant. This shortage significantly slows case processing, which affects both civilians and members of service alike. Thanks to the agency's dedicated investigators, CCRB investigation timelines have

improved, however these gains remain unnoticed by civilians and NYPD members as their cases await board review.

CONCLUSION:

It is my hope today that I have communicated how critical a role the CCRB plays in the overall sense of public safety in New York City. As I have stated, the Agency's ability to fulfill our charter-mandated responsibilities have been significantly strained due to a historic rise in complaints, expanded jurisdiction, and enhanced investigative quality. The requested budget increase is not only a financial necessity but an investment in the rights of New Yorkers. Fully meeting the Agency's fiscal need will be an instrumental measure to uphold the integrity of civilian oversight. I urge this Council to provide the funding necessary to enable the CCRB to continue its vital work and rise to the responsibilities entrusted to it by the people of New York City. I'd like to thank you all for your time, and Mr. Darche and I are happy to take any questions you may have.

Summary

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)

FY26 New Need Request

3/10/2025 - Budget Testimony

	New Need (NN) Request				FY25 Adopted Budget				Total Proposed Agency Budget			
	Total New Need Requested headcount	Total PS \$	Total OTPS \$	Grand Total	FY25 Adopted Headcount	Total PS \$	Total OTPS \$	Grand Total	Headcount	Total PS \$	Total OTPS \$	FY25 Budget + NN (\$)
Consolidated	150	\$ 12,755,182	\$ 4,153,985	\$ 16,909,167	247	\$ 22,607,861	\$ 5,023,493	\$ 27,631,354	397	\$ 35,363,043	\$ 9,177,478	\$ 44,540,521
High Priority Only*	90	\$ 8,091,333	\$ 641,410	\$ 8,732,743								

as of 01.13.2025

Program/Unit	Category	Current Active FTEs	Position Posted/Hiring/Temporary Leave in Progress	Total FTE	New Needs FTE		IDEAL UNIT HEADCOUNT
Executive	Executive	5	0	5	1	Chief Diversity Officer (1)	6
Office of General Counsel	Admin/Support	6.5	0	6.5	2	FOIL Attorney (1), Media Service Technician (1)	8.5
Admin - MIS	Admin/Support	8	0	8	4	Computer Support Technician (3), IT Engineer/Technician (1)	12
Admin - MIS/Policy	Admin/Support	5	0	5	3	Policy Director (1), Developer (1), SQL programmer/data analyst (1)	8
Admin - HR	Admin/Support	5	0	5	5	Director of Recruitment (1), Staff Clinician (1), HR Reporting Officer (1), Discipline Officer (1), HR Generalist (1)	10
Admin - Security	Admin/Support	1	0	1	2	Public Security Officer (2)	3
Admin - Board Panel Support	Admin/Support	1	0	1	0		1
Admin - Budget, Procurement, Fiscal and Operation (BPFO)	Admin/Support	4	1	5	5	Facility Manager (1), Fleet Coordinator (1), Procurement (1), Budget and Fiscal Reporting Analyst (1), Grant Writer and Coordinator (1)	10
Admin - CAU (Civilian Assistance Unit)	Admin/Support	3	0	3	2	Civilian Assistance Unit Advocate (1), Civilian Assistance Unit Therapist (1)	5
Admin - CMU (Case Management Unit)	Admin/Support	9	0	9	0		9
Communication	IGA/Outreach	1	0	1	5	Senior Communication Director (1), Communication Director(1), Press Secretary (1), Digital Manager (1), Graphic Designer (1)	6
Outreach	IGA/Outreach	6.5	0	6.5	8	Borough Coordinators (4), Community Liaison (4)	14.5
APU	APU	15	3	18	6	APU Prosecutor (3), Trial Preparation Assistants (2), Administrative Assistant (1),	24
Inv - RPBP	Investigation	18.5	2	20.5	43	Investigative Manager (3), Data Analyst (3), Investigator Attorney & Fellow (1), Supervising Investigator (4), Investigator Level 3 (7), Investigator Level 2 (10), Investigator Level 1 (10), Body Worn Camera Analyst (5)	63.5
Inv - General Investigation*	Investigation	112	10	122	60	Investigative Manager (3), Supervising Investigators (3), Investigator Level 3 (7), Investigator Level 2 (10), Investigator Level 1 (17), Body Worn Camera Analyst (20)	182
Inv - Training	Investigation	2	0	2	1	Deputy Director of Training (1)	3
Inv - Special Ops	Investigation	2	0	2	1	Special Operations Generalist (1)	3
Inv - Intake	Investigation	9	0	9	2	Social Media Specialist (2)	11
Inv - Field Team	Investigation	7	0	7	0		7
Inv - NYPD	Investigation	9	0	9	0		9
Inv - Mediation	Investigation	4	0	4	0		4
Total FTE		233.5	16	249.5	150		399.5
Board Members		11	0	11	4	15 Members Board Requirement	15
		244.5	16	260.5	154		

* FOUR Upcoming departures in late January, February and April 2025

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)
Unit Name: Consolidated

								New Needs FY26+		
PS										
Description/Office Title	Priority (H,M,L)	Internal Rank	Civil Title	Title Code	Salary Range	Program/Unit	PS/OTPS	HC	Amount	Summary Category
Chief Diversity Officer	L	52	Deputy Executive Director M1	10214	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	Executive	PS	1	\$ 120,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
FOIL Attorney	M	7	Agency Attorney	30087	\$71,163 - \$108,641	Office of General Counsel	PS	1	\$ 95,000	FOIL Attorney
Media Service Technician	M	31	Media Service Technician Level 3	90622	\$59,457 - \$78,345	Office of General Counsel	PS	1	\$ 65,000	Expanded General Counsel Office
Computer Support Technician	L	58	COMPUTER SPECIALIST (SOFTWARE)	13632	\$89,550 - \$163,119	Admin - MIS	PS	3	\$ 270,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
IT Engineer/Technician	H	9	Certified IT Administrator (LAN/WAN)	13652	\$89,550 - \$163,119	Admin - MIS	PS	1	\$ 125,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Policy Director	M	38	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	Admin - MIS/Policy	PS	1	\$ 160,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Developer	M	37	Computer Systems Manager (Non MGRL)	1005D	\$58,700 - \$134,406	Admin - MIS/Policy	PS	1	\$ 120,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
SQL programmer/data analyst	L	59	Computer Systems Manager (Non MGRL)	1005D	\$58,700 - \$134,406	Admin - MIS/Policy	PS	1	\$ 110,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Director of Recruitment	H	32	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	Admin - HR/General Investigation	PS	1	\$ 135,000	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Staff Clinician	M	32	Administrative Director of Social Service	10056	\$66,066 - \$90,000	Admin - HR/CAU	PS	1	\$ 90,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
HR Reporting Officer	M	35	Staff Analyst Trainee	12749	\$46,059 - \$63,556	Admin - HR	PS	1	\$ 50,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
Disciplinary Officer	M	35	Staff Analyst Trainee	12749	\$46,059 - \$63,556	Admin - HR	PS	1	\$ 50,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
HR Generalist	H	13	Staff Analyst Trainee	12749	\$46,059 - \$63,556	Admin - HR	PS	1	\$ 50,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Public Safety Officer	H	12	Special Officer	70810	\$38,074 - \$43,024	Admin - Security	PS	2	\$ 110,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Facility Manager	L	55	Principal Administrative Associate	10124	\$51,816 - \$75,903	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
Fleet Coordinator	L	56	Principal Administrative Associate	10124	\$51,816 - \$75,903	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
Procurement Analyst	M	36	Procurement Analyst Level 1	12158	\$45,233 - \$76,723	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 76,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
Budget and Fiscal Reporting Analyst	H	10	Administrative Staff Analyst/Accountant	10026	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 70,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Grant Writer and Coordinator	L	57	Principal Administrative Associate	10124	\$51,816 - \$75,903	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
CAU Advocate for Civilians	M	40	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	Admin - CAU	PS	1	\$ 68,238	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
CAU Therapist for Civilians	L	40	Social Worker	52613	\$59,494 - \$79,357	Admin - CAU	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded Admin and Executive Staff
Senior Communication Director	H	11	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 140,000	High Prority Communication Staff
Communication Director	H	11	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 125,000	High Prority Communication Staff
Press Secretary	L	61	Associate Public Information Specialist	60816	\$59,567 - \$84,111	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 80,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Digital Manager	M	39	Community Coordinator	56058	\$60,889 - \$94,521	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Graphic Designer	M	39	Graphic Artist	91415	\$49,822 - \$109,438	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 70,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Borough Coordinators	H	8	Community Coordinator	56058	\$60,889 - \$94,521	IGA/Outreach	PS	4	\$ 300,000	High Priority Outreach Coordinators
Community Liasion	L	60	Community Coordinator	56058	\$60,889 - \$94,521	IGA/Outreach	PS	4	\$ 300,000	Expanded of Outreach, Policy and Communication Positions
Administrative Assistants	L	54	Principal Administrative Associate Level 1	10124	\$51,816 - \$75,903	APU	PS	1	\$ 75,000	Expanded APU Prosecutors Positions
APU Prosecutors	H	5	Executive Agency Counsel	95005	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	APU	PS	3	\$ 375,000	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions
Trial Preparation Assistants	M	34	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	APU	PS	2	\$ 136,476	Expanded APU Prosecutors Positions
Attorney Fee Registration Fee Reimbursement	M	28				APU	PS	N/A	\$ 10,500	Medium Priority APU Prosecutors Positions
Promotion of APU staff	H	1				APU	PS	N/A	\$ 13,000	Promotions
Investigative Managers	M	30	Investigative Manager	82975	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	INV - RPBP	PS	3	\$ 327,051	Expanded Racial Profiling Positions
Data Analyst of Racial Profiling	H	4	City Research Scientist	21744	\$70,087 - \$153,703	INV - RPBP	PS	3	\$ 254,943	High Priority Racial Profiling Positions
Investigator Attorney & Fellow	H	4	Agency Attorney Interne	30086	\$70,228 - \$85,269	INV - RPBP	PS	1	\$ 82,000	High Priority Racial Profiling Positions
Supervising Investigators	H	6	Supervising Investigator	31166	\$86,181 - \$109,913	INV - RPBP	PS	4	\$ 392,188	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 3	H	30	Investigator Level 3	31165	\$67,791 - \$102,270	INV - RPBP	PS	7	\$ 579,593	Expanded Racial Profiling Positions
Investigator Level 2	H	6	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	INV - RPBP	PS	10	\$ 682,380	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 1	H	29	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	INV - RPBP	PS	10	\$ 476,010	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Body Worn Camera Analyst	M	32	Media Service Technician Level 1	90622	\$46,767 - \$61,092	INV - RPBP	PS	5	\$ 269,400	Body Worn Camera Analyst
Promotion of RPBP staff	H	1				INV - RPBP	PS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Promotions
Investigative Managers (Squad Leaders)	H	6	Investigative Manager	82975	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	Inv - General Investigation	PS	3	\$ 323,952	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Supervising Investigators	H	6	Supervising Investigator	31166	\$86,181 - \$109,913	Inv - General Investigation	PS	3	\$ 294,141	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 3	H	6	Investigator Level 3	31165	\$67,791 - \$102,270	Inv - General Investigation	PS	7	\$ 579,593	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 2	H	6	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	Inv - General Investigation	PS	10	\$ 682,380	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 1	H	29	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	Inv - General Investigation	PS	17	\$ 809,217	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Body Worn Camera Analyst	M	32	Media Service Technician Level 1	90622	\$46,767 - \$61,092	Inv - General Investigation	PS	20	\$ 1,077,600	Body Worn Camera Analyst
Attorney Fee Registration Fee Reimbursement	H	27				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 1,750	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions
Promotion of Investigator Level 3 to SI	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 135,320	Promotions
Promotion of Investigator Level 2 to 3	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 135,320	Promotions
Promotion of Investigator Level 1 to 2	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 93,270	Promotions
Incumbent Salary Adjustment Level 1	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 35,700	Incumbent Salary Rate Adjustment
Deputy Director of Investigator Training	L	53	Investigative Manager	82975	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	INV - Training	PS	1	\$ 101,795	Expanded General Investigation Positions

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)
Unit Name: Consolidated

								New Needs FY26+		
PS										
Description/Office Title	Priority (H,M,L)	Internal Rank	Civil Title	Title Code	Salary Range	Program/Unit	PS/OTPS	HC	Amount	Summary Category
Special Operations Generalist	M	33	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	INV - Special Ops	PS	1	\$ 47,601	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Social Media Specialist	M	34	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	INV - Intake	PS	2	\$ 95,202	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Overtime Pay	H	2				Agencywide	PS	N/A	\$ 250,000	Overtime Pay
Board Member Session Pay	H	3	Board Member			Agencywide	PS	N/A	\$ 100,000	Board Member Session Pay
Subtotal Personnel								150	\$ 11,595,620	
Admin Cost						10%			\$ 1,159,562	
Total PS									\$ 12,755,182	
OTPS										
Telecommunication (\$100/pp/mth)	M	15	New Staff	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 180,000	General Operating Cost
Software (\$75/pp)	M	15	New Staff	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 11,250	General Operating Cost
Occupancy (\$500/pp/mth)	M	15	New Staff	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 900,000	General Operating Cost
Office Supplies (\$150/pp)	M	15	New Staff	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 22,500	General Operating Cost
Printer Toners and Cartridges	M	43	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Printing and Supplies
General Staff Training and Development (\$250/pp)	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 119,000	Staff Conferences
Postage	H	26	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 2,500	Printing and Supplies
Space expansion and enhancement	M	44	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 500,000	Space Expansion to create more office cubicles
Printing business cards	L	62	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU/Inv	OTPS	N/A	\$ 2,500	Printing and Supplies
Toll/Vehicles Fuel/Maintenance/Congestion Pricing	M	44	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - Operations	OTPS	N/A	\$ 2,000	General Operating Cost
Data Storage Array Upgrade and increase Shelves Capacity by 25% - 50%	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 75,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Intracity agency Complaint Record System	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 100,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Audio Video Upgrade	M	45	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 75,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Agency Laptops	M	42	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 190,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
New Desktop and Monitors	M	42	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 125,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
MIS Training and Development	L	63	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 20,000	Staff Conferences
CAU Intrepretion services	M	64	N/A	N/A	N/A	CAU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Professional and Consultant Services
Outreach Promotional Supplies and Materials	M	46	N/A	N/A	N/A	IGA/Outreach	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Printing and Supplies
Printing Services - Board Meeting, Brochures, posters	M	47	N/A	N/A	N/A	IGA/Outreach	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Printing and Supplies
Conference, Community Event, Registration	M	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	IGA/Outreach	OTPS	N/A	\$ 10,000	Staff Conferences
Advertising	L	16	N/A	N/A	N/A	IGA/Communication	OTPS	N/A	\$ 1,000,000	Media and Advertising
Equipment (Camera)	M	49	N/A	N/A	N/A	IGA/Communication	OTPS	N/A	\$ 2,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Nacole Training and Development	H	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agency Attorney, Counsel, Inv St	OTPS	N/A	\$ 20,000	Staff Conferences
Geneva Audio Transcription Services	M	45	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 30,000	Language Access Professional Services
Delta Court Services - Subpoena	H	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 9,500	Professional and Consultant Services
Expert Witness	M	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 10,000	Professional and Consultant Services
Prosecutor Conferences	M	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 10,000	Staff Conferences
Thomas Reuter License (\$140/user)	H	23	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU/Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 7,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Axon body worn Camera Licenses	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 150,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI®)	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 41,800	Staff Conferences
Implicit Bias Training	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	General Investigation/INV	OTPS	N/A	\$ 20,000	Staff Conferences
LexisNexis \$80/user	H	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU/Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 6,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Language Access - Interpretation and Document Translation	M	41	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 75,000	Language Access Professional Services
Handshake Recruitment Subscription	M	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 8,000	Subscriptions
Job Fair Entrance Cost	H	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Notary and Comissioner of Deeds Filing Fee, Reimbursement,	H	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 1,300	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Language Access - Interpreting	H	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - Mediation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 1,000	Language Access Professional Services
Mediator Services	H	25	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - Mediation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 25,000	Professional and Consultant Services
Total Other than Personnel Services									\$ 3,776,350	

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)
Unit Name: Consolidated

								New Needs FY26+		
PS										
Description/Office Title	Priority (H,M,L)	Internal Rank	Civil Title	Title Code	Salary Range	Program/Unit	PS/OTPS	HC	Amount	Summary Category
Admin Cost						10%			\$ 377,635	
Total OTPS									\$ 4,153,985	
Total PS & OTPS									\$ 16,909,167	

High Priority

Priority (H,M,L)	H		
Internal Rank	Summary Category	Sum of Amount	Sum of HC
1	Incumbent Salary Rate Adjustment	\$ 35,700.00	0
	Promotions	\$ 381,910.00	0
2	Overtime Pay	\$ 250,000.00	0
3	Board Member Session Pay	\$ 100,000.00	0
4	High Priority Racial Profiling Positions	\$ 336,943.00	4
5	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions	\$ 375,000.00	3
6	High Priority General Investigation Staff	\$ 2,954,634.00	37
8	High Priority Outreach Coordinators	\$ 300,000.00	4
9	High Priority Administrative Staff	\$ 125,000.00	1
10	High Priority Administrative Staff	\$ 70,000.00	1
11	High Priority Communication Staff	\$ 265,000.00	2
12	High Priority Administrative Staff	\$ 110,000.00	2
13	High Priority Administrative Staff	\$ 50,000.00	1
17	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing	\$ 175,000.00	0
	Staff Conferences	\$ 119,000.00	0
18	Staff Conferences	\$ 20,000.00	0
19	Software Licenses and Subscriptions	\$ 150,000.00	0
	Staff Conferences	\$ 61,800.00	0
20	Professional and Consultant Services	\$ 9,500.00	0
21	Language Access Professional Services	\$ 1,000.00	0
22	Software Licenses and Subscriptions	\$ 6,000.00	0
23	Software Licenses and Subscriptions	\$ 7,000.00	0
24	Software Licenses and Subscriptions	\$ 6,300.00	0
25	Professional and Consultant Services	\$ 25,000.00	0
26	Printing and Supplies	\$ 2,500.00	0
27	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions	\$ 1,750.00	0
29	Expanded General Investigation Positions	\$ 1,285,227.00	27
30	Expanded Racial Profiling Positions	\$ 579,593.00	7
32	Expanded General Investigation Positions	\$ 135,000.00	1
Grand Total		\$ 7,938,857.00	90
Admin Cost	10%	\$ 793,885.70	
		\$ 8,732,742.70	

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)
Unit Name: Consolidated

								New Needs FY26+		
PS										
Description/Office Title	Priority (H,M,L)	Internal Rank	Civil Title	Title Code	Salary Range	Program/Unit	PS/OTPS	HC	Amount	Summary Category
IT Engineer/Technician	H	9	Certified IT Administrator (LAN/WAN)	13652	\$89,550 - \$163,119	Admin - MIS	PS	1	\$ 125,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Director of Recruitment	H	32	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	Admin - HR/General Investigation	PS	1	\$ 135,000	Expanded General Investigation Positions
HR Generalist	H	13	Staff Analyst Trainee	12749	\$46,059 - \$63,556	Admin - HR	PS	1	\$ 50,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Public Safety Officer	H	12	Special Officer	70810	\$38,074 - \$43,024	Admin - Security	PS	2	\$ 110,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Budget and Fiscal Reporting Analyst	H	10	Administrative Staff Analyst/Accountant	10026	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	Admin - BPFO	PS	1	\$ 70,000	High Priority Administrative Staff
Senior Communication Director	H	11	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 140,000	High Prority Communication Staff
Communication Director	H	11	Deputy Assistant Director (Non-MGRL)	1019A	\$87,902 - \$136,591	IGA/Communication	PS	1	\$ 125,000	High Prority Communication Staff
Borough Coordinators	H	8	Community Coordinator	56058	\$60,889 - \$94,521	IGA/Outreach	PS	4	\$ 300,000	High Priority Outreach Coordinators
APU Prosecutors	H	5	Executive Agency Counsel	95005	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	APU	PS	3	\$ 375,000	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions
Promotion of APU staff	H	1				APU	PS	N/A	\$ 13,000	Promotions
Data Analyst of Racial Profiling	H	4	City Research Scientist	21744	\$70,087 - \$153,703	INV - RPBP	PS	3	\$ 254,943	High Priority Racial Profiling Positions
Investigator Attorney & Fellow	H	4	Agency Attorney Interne	30086	\$70,228 - \$85,269	INV - RPBP	PS	1	\$ 82,000	High Priority Racial Profiling Positions
Supervising Investigators	H	6	Supervising Investigator	31166	\$86,181 - \$109,913	INV - RPBP	PS	4	\$ 392,188	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 3	H	30	Investigator Level 3	31165	\$67,791 - \$102,270	INV - RPBP	PS	7	\$ 579,593	Expanded Racial Profiling Positions
Investigator Level 2	H	6	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	INV - RPBP	PS	10	\$ 682,380	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 1	H	29	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	INV - RPBP	PS	10	\$ 476,010	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Promotion of RPBP staff	H	1				INV - RPBP	PS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Promotions
Investigative Managers (Squad Leaders)	H	6	Investigative Manager	82975	\$ 58,700 - \$ 161,534	Inv - General Investigation	PS	3	\$ 323,952	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Supervising Investigators	H	6	Supervising Investigator	31166	\$86,181 - \$109,913	Inv - General Investigation	PS	3	\$ 294,141	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 3	H	6	Investigator Level 3	31165	\$67,791 - \$102,270	Inv - General Investigation	PS	7	\$ 579,593	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 2	H	6	Investigator Level 2	31165	\$56,928 - \$82,320	Inv - General Investigation	PS	10	\$ 682,380	High Priority General Investigation Staff
Investigator Level 1	H	29	Investigator Level 1	31165	\$47,601	Inv - General Investigation	PS	17	\$ 809,217	Expanded General Investigation Positions
Attorney Fee Registration Fee Reimbursement	H	27				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 1,750	High Priority APU Prosecutors Positions
Promotion of Investigator Level 3 to SI	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 135,320	Promotions
Promotion of Investigator Level 2 to 3	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 135,320	Promotions
Promotion of Investigator Level 1 to 2	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 93,270	Promotions
Incumbent Salary Adjustment Level 1	H	1				Inv - General Investigation	PS	N/A	\$ 35,700	Incumbent Salary Rate Adjustment
Overtime Pay	H	2				Agencywide	PS	N/A	\$ 250,000	Overtime Pay
Board Member Session Pay	H	3	Board Member			Agencywide	PS	N/A	\$ 100,000	Board Member Session Pay
Subtotal Personnel								90	\$ 7,355,757	
Admin Cost						10%			\$ 735,576	
Total PS									\$ 8,091,333	
OTPS										
General Staff Training and Development (\$250/pp)	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 119,000	Staff Conferences
Postage	H	26	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 2,500	Printing and Supplies
Data Storage Array Upgrade and increase Shelves Capacity by 25% - 50%	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 75,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Intracity agency Complaint Record System	H	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	Admin - MIS	OTPS	N/A	\$ 100,000	Computer Hardware, Subscription and Data Processing
Nacole Training and Development	H	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agency Attorney, Counsel, Inv St	OTPS	N/A	\$ 20,000	Staff Conferences
Delta Court Services - Subpoena	H	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU	OTPS	N/A	\$ 9,500	Professional and Consultant Services
Thomas Reuter License (\$140/user)	H	23	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU/Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 7,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Axon body worn Camera Licenses	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 150,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI®)	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 41,800	Staff Conferences
Implicit Bias Training	H	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	General Investigation/INV	OTPS	N/A	\$ 20,000	Staff Conferences

NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)
Unit Name: Consolidated

PS								New Needs FY26+		
Description/Office Title	Priority (H,M,L)	Internal Rank	Civil Title	Title Code	Salary Range	Program/Unit	PS/OTPS	HC	Amount	Summary Category
LexisNexis \$80/user	H	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	APU/Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 6,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Job Fair Entrance Cost	H	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Agencywide	OTPS	N/A	\$ 5,000	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Notary and Comissioner of Deeds Filing Fee, Reimbursement,	H	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - General Investigation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 1,300	Software Licenses and Subscriptions
Language Access - Interpreting	H	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	Inv - Mediation	OTPS	N/A	\$ 1,000	Language Access Professional Services

Testimony

of

Bridget G. Brennan
Special Narcotics Prosecutor

Before

The New York City Council
Committees on Public Safety and Finance

Fiscal Year 2026

Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 11, 2025
Council Chambers
City Hall

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL NARCOTICS PROSECUTOR

I am grateful to the leadership of the New York City Council and for your support of my office and the offices of the District Attorneys. We continue to consult and collaborate with you under the leadership of Chairperson Yusef Salaam to promote public safety by reducing crime and recidivism, and to ensure that the criminal justice system strives for fair treatment for all.

The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) was among the first agencies to detect the emerging opioid epidemic in New York City more than fifteen years ago. Our office has been a leader in efforts to rein in its various phases. We have prosecuted drug traffickers and distributors throughout the city and at the same time expanded treatment opportunities available to defendants, and educational outreach to students, parents and seniors.

I am pleased to share encouraging news today. Overdose deaths in New York City have dropped a meaningful 22%, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data for 12 months ending in September 2024. This welcomed decline mirrors trends across much of the U.S.

We are cautiously optimistic as we seek to better understand the reasons for this shift, so we can stay on track. Both law enforcement and public health experts attribute the decline in overdoses to a significant decrease in the amount and potency of fentanyl entering our communities, as well as the availability of lifesaving antidotes like naloxone and increased public awareness. It appears that pressures exerted on the global fentanyl supply chain by law enforcement and through diplomatic efforts are having an impact.

In New York City, the fentanyl we are seizing is more diluted and we are seizing less of it. A disruption in the production of fentanyl in Mexico last year coincided with the tightening of restrictions in China on precursor chemicals necessary to make fentanyl.

Unfortunately, the cocaine supply continues to balloon, largely due to a dramatic increase in cultivation in Colombia. Cocaine is less likely to cause an overdose, however, unless it is mixed with fentanyl.

While the city's 22% reduction in fatal overdoses marks a significant milestone, the number of people dy-

ing from drug overdoses remains staggeringly high. An estimated 2,572 lives were lost in New York City in the 12 months ending in September 2024 – 70% more fatal overdoses than occurred in 2019, before the pandemic.

SNP strives to save lives through innovative strategies that stem the flow of lethal drugs. Because we have jurisdiction over felony narcotics and related crimes citywide, we work with local, state and federal law enforcement teams to intercept large loads of lethal narcotics and to prosecute high-level narcotics traffickers. We also respond to community complaints about persistent drug sales activity and associated violence with citywide impact.

The drug supply is more unpredictable than ever before. SNP tracks new developments as they unfold, and shares information with law enforcement and public health partners. Over the past year, the variety of drug mixtures recovered in our investigations has rapidly expanded. We see in powdery mixtures containing fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, xylazine, cocaine, methamphetamine, and other substances. Heroin is reemerging. Last year, “pink cocaine” or “tusi” gained notoriety in New York City. “Pink cocaine” is a loosely defined term describing a concoction containing ketamine and possibly MDMA and/or methamphetamine, but only sometimes actual cocaine.

We continue to see fentanyl pressed into pills that are sold online, often masquerading as pharmaceuticals such as oxycodone and Adderall, and sold on social media sites. Tragically, teenagers and young adults have overdosed when they have made purchases of counterfeit drugs through social media and made delivery arrangements on encrypted messaging apps or direct messaging services.

Disguised as pharmaceutical medication, counterfeit pills create an illusion of safety. Fatal overdoses among teens doubled with the onset of the global pandemic. By 2022, an average of 22 teens between the ages of 14 and 18 years died in the U.S. each week from overdoses. Fortunately, teen overdoses are now declining, down 10% in 2023, according to the CDC.

Across the U.S., parents who suffered heartbreaking losses of children are fighting back. Families have mounted class-action lawsuits against social media

companies, such as Snapchat, arguing that these platforms make it easy for drug dealers to target children. Families seek to force social media platforms to take responsibility for the safety of those who use their services, and to be held accountable for their part in these tragedies.

At SNP, we have redoubled our efforts to educate teens about the dangers of fentanyl through the efforts of our Educational Outreach Committee. In partnership with the New York City Department of Education, SNP staff members visit classrooms and auditoriums across the city to share what we have learned with middle, high school and college students. The committee also trains teachers and parents, and we are extending our reach to seniors, educating them about the dangers of fentanyl, counterfeit pills, and how to safeguard medications within their homes.

My office has reached thousands of teens and seniors through our prevention education events. We welcome opportunities to meet with groups in your districts and look forward to continued collaboration leading to safer communities and lives saved.

We have accomplished much over the past year, particularly considering the enormous workloads carried by our attorneys and professional staff. My office continues to operate with a significantly reduced headcount when compared to pre-2020 years, adding to the responsibilities of existing staff members. Because we rely on the District Attorneys' offices to assign Assistant District Attorneys to SNP, their staffing shortages lead to shortages for us as well. We are working diligently on recruitment and retention efforts and are enjoying some success. We are grateful that the number of ADAs assigned to SNP increased in 2024.

Changes to Discovery practices required under the Criminal Justice Reforms have placed more demands on our ADAs and professional staff than we could have anticipated. I support efforts by the District Attorneys and Governor Kathy Hochul to make common-sense improvements to streamline the Discovery Laws. Changes proposed assure swift, meaningful disclosure of evidence without diminishing our obligation to give the defense speedy access to relevant evidence in every criminal case. We can accomplish that goal while

reducing procedural delays and ensuring victims' rights and their access to pretrial services are also protected. However, even if enacted, the proposed changes will not substantially reduce the huge administrative burden that the new Discovery Laws have imposed on our staff.

For FY 2026, we are asking for the City Council's support for two funding requests. We are renewing our request to support our Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programming, which was expanded in 2020 to encompass the Manhattan Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court (ATI Court). SNP collaborates with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and the Center for Justice Innovation's (CJI) Manhattan Justice Opportunities to assist individuals who were not served by previously existing programs.

We have submitted our request for treatment and diversion funding each year in FY 2023, FY 2024, and FY 2025 and we again renew our request for \$218,841 to support our ATI program in FY 2026. These funds will be used by CJI's Manhattan Justice Opportunities to cover costs associated with managing clients from our office and coordinating the program with the Office of Court Administration (OCA).

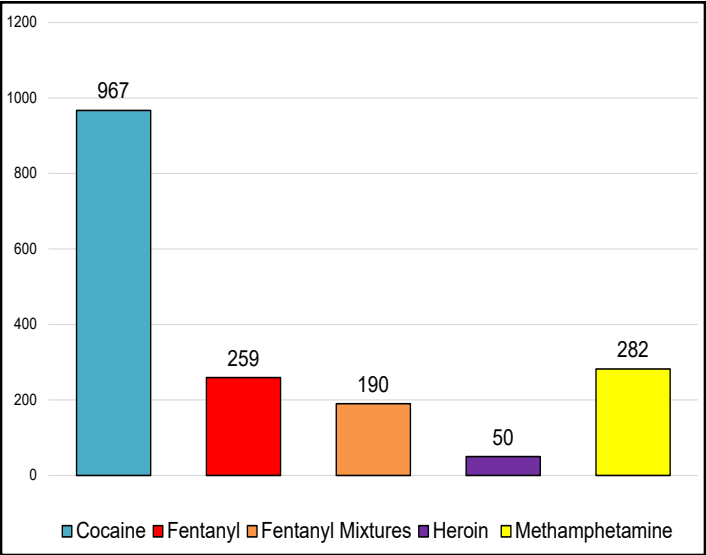
To meet an entirely different need, we are also submitting a request for \$150,000 in capital funding to upgrade radios for our Investigators Unit in FY 2026.

I appreciate the close relationship my office has with the Council. Over the past year I have met with members and your constituents to learn about specific community concerns and discuss ways to address them.

Bridget G. Brennan
Special Narcotics Prosecutor
for the City of New York

Strategic Approach to Prosecutions

2024 SNP Drug Seizures in Pounds



SNP employs a strategic approach to curbing the flow of deadly narcotics into New York City and the region. Investigations focus on high-level trafficking organizations, often with international ties. In 2024, SNP cases with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and other partners, netted over 500 pounds of fentanyl, heroin and opioid mixtures, and nearly 1,000 pounds of cocaine.

To identify large loads of lethal narcotics entering the city, SNP employs various investigative techniques, including physical and electronic surveillance. We work closely with the five District Attorneys to tailor our strategies to areas with citywide impact and concentrations of open narcotics sales, such as Times Square. In crafting our approach, we analyze drug markets

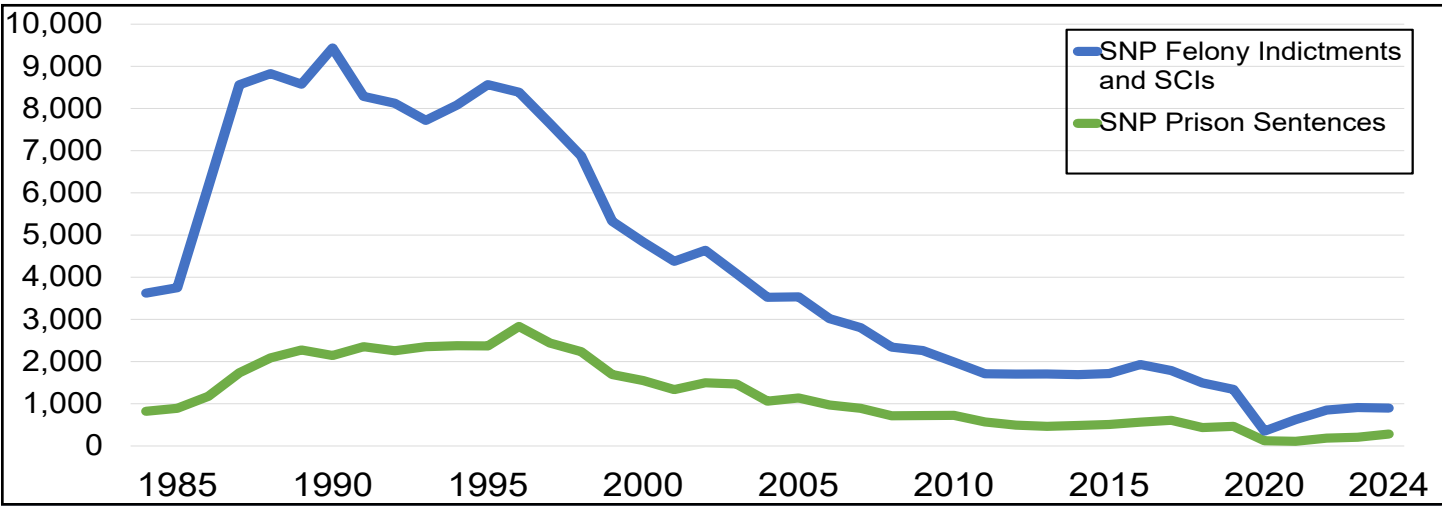
linked to clusters of overdose deaths and violence, receive input from community groups and elected officials, and collect information from law enforcement and public health partners.

The City’s drug market is more unpredictable than ever before, with the explosion of synthetic mixtures. Often buyers are unaware of contents of the drugs they purchase, and specific ingredients are only known to law enforcement once laboratory analysis is completed. The cocaine supply continues to surge. The primary source is Colombia, where dramatic increases in cultivation followed the government’s discontinuation of aerial eradication of coca plants.

SNP’s approach is consistent with the City’s goal of reducing incarceration. By focusing on high-level traffickers, and persistent drug activity, our prosecutions have greater impact with fewer arrests, in contrast to past strategies that led to far more arrests and incarcerations. In 2024, 282 individuals prosecuted by SNP received prison sentences, 90 percent fewer people than a typical year in the 1990s.

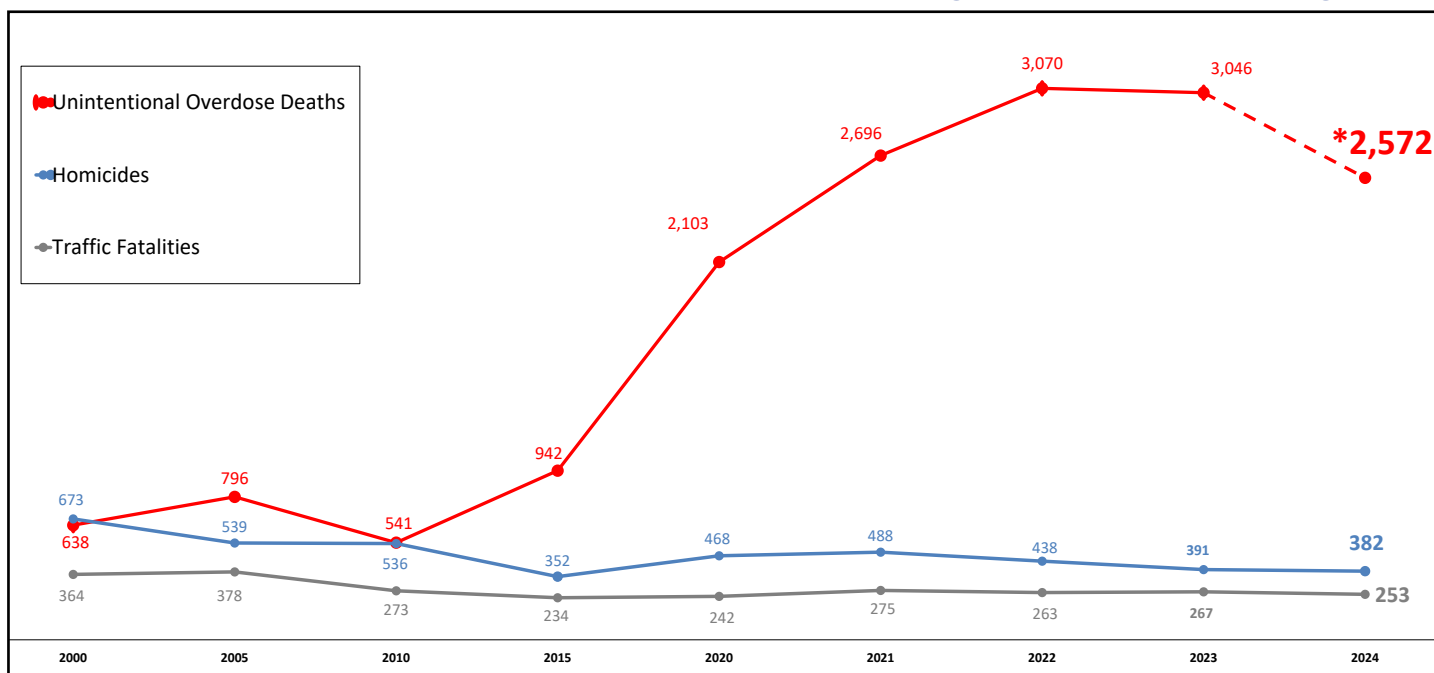
The office is committed to connecting eligible individuals with Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, with the goal of promoting public safety and reducing recidivism. In 2020, SNP expanded its ATI offerings, assessing individuals facing felony charges for treatment and social service referrals through the Manhattan Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court, where participants receive supportive services under a court-supervised plea agreement.

SNP Felony Indictments/SCIs and Prison Sentences (1984-2024)



Rapid Expansion of Synthetic Drugs

NYC Fatal Overdoses Decline in 2024; Falling Below Record Highs



Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), predicted data for Sept. 2023-Sept. 2024; NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOMHM); New York City Police Department (NYPD); Vision Zero New York City

The 22% decline in fatal overdoses in New York City for 2024 is encouraging after years of increases. Overdose deaths in the city more than doubled during the pandemic, growing from 1,497 in 2019 to a height of 3,070 in 2022, as highly potent fentanyl flooded our city.

Even with the reported decline, approximately 2,572 people died of drug poisoning in the city between September 2023 and September 2024, according to the CDC. As a point of comparison, New York City's overdose deaths in that 12-month period are roughly equivalent to the total number of lives lost nationwide to concealed handguns (legally owned) since 2007.

To maintain our gains in driving deaths down, we must understand the causes that factor into the high overdose numbers and tailor our strategies accordingly. Notably, Mexican trafficking groups are experiencing a disruption in the production of fentanyl, likely due to global supply chain shifts. Enforcement and diplomatic efforts have led to a shortage in precursor chemicals necessary for manufacturing fentanyl. The Chinese government tightened restrictions on a key precursor chemical, 4-ANPP, in 2024, creating a ripple effect.

Fentanyl entering the U.S. is less pure than in recent years, according to DEA. Intelligence and enforcement activity at the southwest border suggests that Mexican supply organizations are attempting to make up for the shortage in fentanyl by experimenting with adding new synthetic substances to stretch out the product.



New York Times, December 26, 2024

Surge in Chemically Produced Synthetics

Synthetic Drugs	Drug Descriptions
Fentanyl	Potent opioid linked to 80% of ODs in NYC, 50 times stronger than heroin; pharmaceutical anesthetic now mass-produced in illicit drug laboratories
Fentanyl analogs (e.g. para-fluorofentanyl, acetyl fentanyl, carfentanil)	Variants of fentanyl with different chemical compositions and potencies; formulas tweaked to avoid regulations
Carfentanil	Highly potent fentanyl analog, 100 times stronger than fentanyl
Xylazine	Non-controlled substance; veterinary sedative; street name “tranq,” mixed with fentanyl and linked to 30% of ODs in NYC; non-opioid, unresponsive to naloxone
Nitazenes	Class of opioids never approved for medical use due to high risk of overdose; mixed with fentanyl
Methamphetamine	Stimulant with high addiction potential; Powder, pill and crystal form; increasingly mixed with fentanyl
Ketamine	Non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer; dissociative hallucinogenic effects; main component of “pink cocaine”
MDMA	Hallucinogenic stimulant; known as “ecstasy” (tablet) and “molly” (powder); ingredient of “pink cocaine”
BTMPS	Non-controlled substance: chemical used in the production of plastics; prevents oxidation; filler in fentanyl mixtures
Tramadol	Opioid pain reliever increasingly mixed with fentanyl

In addition to the reduction in purity, federal law enforcement agencies are generally seizing less fentanyl and the same is true for SNP. Our fentanyl seizures declined by roughly 30 percent in 2024, likely a reflection of reduced production in Mexico.

The proliferation of new types of synthetic drugs is rapidly transforming supplies nationwide and in New York City. Drug mixtures are created in illicit laboratories in Mexico and transported by the truckload into the U.S. Production of synthetic drugs is far easier and cheaper than agricultural cultivation of plants that produce heroin and cocaine. International drug trafficking

organizations rake huge profits while the health and safety of our communities suffer.

A typical drug mixture might include heroin, fentanyl, a fentanyl analog, tramadol and xylazine, plus one or more additional substances, such as cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA, and nitazenes. Some substances, like xylazine, are not controlled despite being present in substantial numbers of overdoses.

As a result of careful tracking by SNP, and collaboration with our partners in law enforcement and public health, new chemical ingredients are continually being

identified. For example, an industrial chemical used in manufacturing plastics, known as BTMPS, is now appearing with some regularity.

Often, batches of drugs are further mixed and diluted within New York City by packaging and distribution networks. In a case announced earlier this month by SNP and DEA New Jersey Field Division, investigators uncovered a drug packaging mill near Morningside Park in South Harlem, across from a public school and around the corner from a Police Athletic League (PAL) Center. Over five pounds of cocaine and powdered fentanyl mixtures were recovered, along with thousands of methamphetamine pills and two guns.

NYPD laboratory analysis determined drug mixtures in the apartment included combinations of fentanyl, heroin, para-fluorofentanyl, tramadol, and xylazine.

Beginning in late 2023, law enforcement and public health officials were alarmed to see carfentanil, a synthetic opioid 100 times more potent than fentanyl, appearing in parts of Brooklyn and Queens. Fortunately, overdoses involving carfentanil remain low. Intelligence

suggests drug trafficking organizations are adding tiny amounts of carfentanil to fentanyl mixtures to boost potency.

SNP handled several cases involving carfentanil in 2024, including one focused on a resident of Bushwick, Brooklyn who sold cocaine to an undercover officer at his apartment. A long-term investigation led a court-authorized search and the seizure of mixtures of heroin, fentanyl, para-fluorofentanyl, and carfentanil. Also present was a mix of ketamine and MDMA, ingredients in “pink cocaine.”

“Pink cocaine” emerged as a new drug trend in 2024. Rarely containing actual cocaine, the main ingredient of “pink cocaine” is ketamine, sometimes mixed with MDMA and/or methamphetamine.

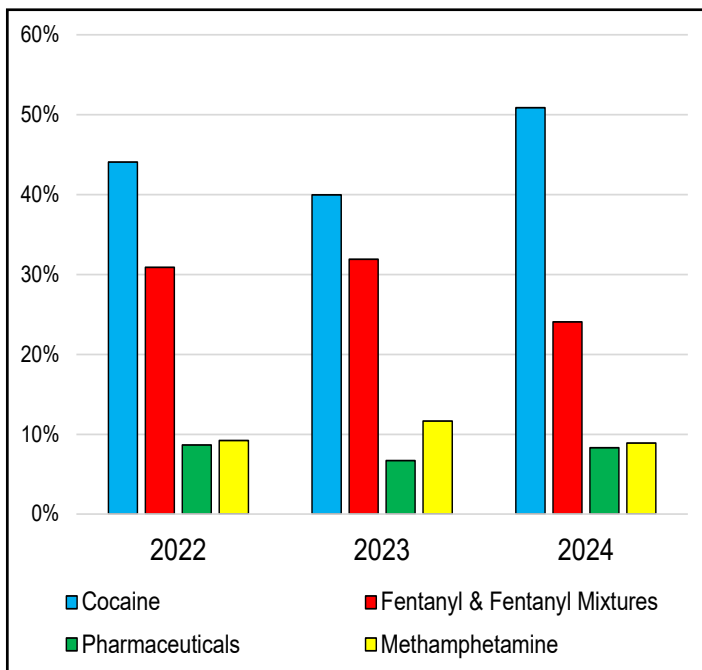
“Pink cocaine” has also been referred to as “tusi.” The original compound in “tusi” was 2C-B, a psychedelic substance. Once 2C-B became harder to get, drug organizations shifted to a drug cocktail, which they dyed pink.



*Drug mixtures and a gun recovered from packaging mill near morningsde park in Harlem earlier this month
(Photo credit: DEA NJ)*

Data Driven Enforcement

Fentanyl Declines, Cocaine Rises in Midtown South: Analysis of NYPD Drug Seizures



In support of SNP's targeted enforcement strategy, the office analyzes data from various sources to identify patterns, such as geographic areas where clusters of overdoses, gun seizures, and narcotics trafficking are concentrated. SNP partners with the NYPD, elected officials, and community groups to develop strategies that support public safety.

In 2024, NYPD data showed a decrease in the number of street level drug seizures containing fentanyl in some areas of the city. There is also some indication that there has been a decrease in the prevalence of fentanyl in the fatal overdose in parts of the city as well. While this is encouraging, more data and more study is necessary to fully understand the shift.

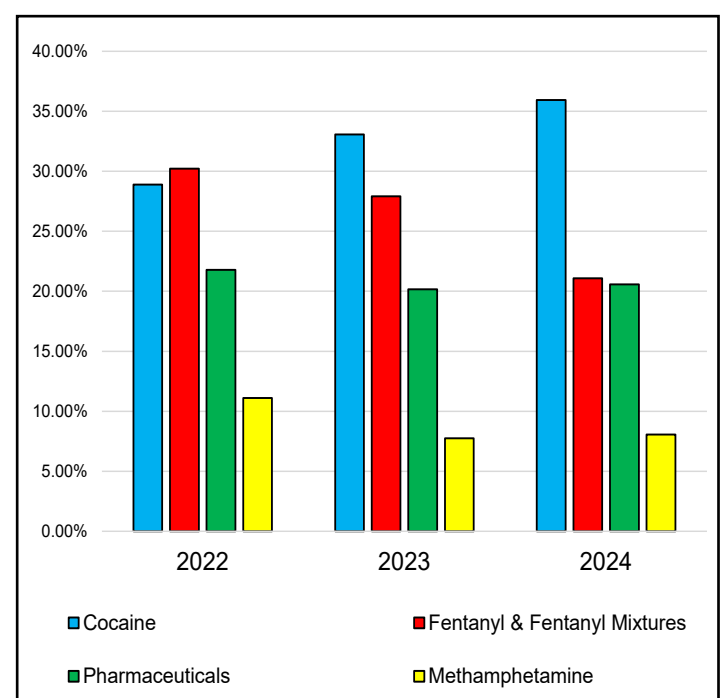
In NYPD's Midtown South Precinct (MTS) for example, approximately 32% of the street level drug seizures contained fentanyl in 2023, whereas only 24% of the street level drug seizures contained fentanyl in 2024 - an 8% decrease (see visual). There is also some indication that the presence of fentanyl has declined in fatal overdoses in MTS from 2023 to 2024. From January to June of 2024, approximately 70% of fatal overdoses involved fentanyl compared to approximately 78% of

fatal overdoses which involved fentanyl in 2023. This analysis is preliminary and based on partial year data. A review of the full year of overdose data for 2024 will enable us to have a better understanding of this shift and to develop more insights.

In Staten Island, where SNP has worked closely with the Staten Island District Attorney's Office and shared data analysis for the past several years, we have seen a similar reduction in the amount of fentanyl identified in street level drug sales. In 2023, approximately 28% of the street level drug seizures contained fentanyl whereas only approximately 21% of the street level drug seizures contained fentanyl in 2024 - a 7% decrease (see visual). As in MTS, there is also some indication that there has been a reduction in the prevalence of fentanyl present in fatal overdoses.

On Staten Island, between January and June 2024, approximately 68% of fatal overdoses involved fentanyl compared to approximately 75% of fatal overdoses involving fentanyl in 2023. This is a very positive development, but we need to gain a deeper understanding through analysis of data for the second half of 2024.

Fentanyl Declines, Cocaine Rises in Staten Island: Analysis of NYPD Drug Seizures



Counterfeit Pills and Sales to Teens



*Pill pressing machine used to make counterfeit pills in Harlem
(Photo credit: NY OCDESF)*

Counterfeit pills are often pressed from fentanyl and other substances in Mexico and smuggled over the U.S.-Mexico border inside trucks or other vehicles. Frequently, pills are made to resemble a certain type of 30 mg oxycodone, which is blue in color and imprinted with the marking M30. Consistent with the overall trend towards new drug mixtures, counterfeit pills contain an increasingly wide range of substances. Fake prescription pills are also pressed by local organizations, using pill presses purchased online. A recent investigation uncovered a pill pressing operation in Harlem, where tablets containing fentanyl, heroin, xylazine and other substances were recovered.

Counterfeit pills are particularly dangerous to the end user. Anyone purchasing them from a source other than a legitimate pharmacy is at grave risk of overdose. While the vast majority of those who suffer fatal overdoses are adults, fentanyl is killing American teens too.

Fentanyl poisoning is a leading cause of death for minors, even as overall drug use in this group has dropped. Teen overdose deaths are largely driven by fentanyl-laced pills, which played a role in nearly 25 percent of these deaths. In 2022, an average of 22 teens between the ages of 14 and 18 years died



Counterfeit oxycodone pills containing mixtures of fentanyl, heroin, xylazine and other substances

in the U.S. each week from overdoses. Fortunately, these deaths are beginning to come down, declining 10% in 2023, according to the CDC.

Studies suggest the increase in teen overdose is linked to a deadlier drug supply and the use of social media. Parents of teens who suffered overdoses have brought lawsuits against major social media platforms, like Snapchat, TikTok, Telegram and Meta Platforms, arguing they aren't doing enough to keep children safe.



**How social media became
a storefront for deadly fake
pills laced with fentanyl**

PBS News, Sep 12, 2024

Educational Outreach



SNP is committed to saving lives by educating young people and families about the opioid crisis and particularly lethal fentanyl. The Educational Outreach Committee, composed of members of the executive, legal, managerial, and professional staff, offers workshops designed to raise awareness among teens, college students, parents, teachers, and school staff. SNP partners with the New York City Department of Education (DOE), DEA New York Division, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the NYPD, and not-for-profits.

SNP serves as a resource for schools by offering presentations to teens and college students in classrooms, training sessions for teachers and DOE staff, and educational forums for parents. Designated SNP attorneys lead workshops on the dangers of fentanyl: what it is, how it gets to New York City, and why teenagers are dying without even knowing they are taking it. SNP staff members explain the types of mixtures found in the city's highly unpredictable drug market, including pills containing fentanyl. Discussions include the role of social media in teen overdoses and how teens can stay safe. Stories from grieving families and recent headlines are featured in SNP's workshops to drive home

the real risks associated with drug use today. A Spanish-speaking staff member is available to present workshops in Spanish.



Bridget Brennan joins DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank A. Tarentino III in offering a presentation to Bronx teens in collaboration with Teaching a Generation (TAG) (Photo credit: TAG)



Chris Edel, Senior Attorney for Special Projects, offering an Educational Outreach presentation to 8th graders at Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School on Staten Island

Current School Year

The 2024-2025 school year is the second for the Educational Outreach Committee, formed in 2023, and it has been a busy one. SNP staff visited 33 classrooms and 12 parents’ groups to spread awareness about the dangers of fentanyl and other potentially lethal substances to over 3,200 students and hundreds of parents. If you know of a school, parent association, senior center, or community group that would like invite SNP’s Educational Outreach Committee to offer a presentation, please email our dedicated email address for such requests: info@snp.nyc.gov.

Workshops for Seniors

In 2024, SNP extended its educational outreach efforts to include senior centers and other community pro-



Fentanyl awareness presentation for seniors offered by Bridget Brennan at Harlem’s Abyssinian Church

grams serving seniors. Some topics covered include the dangers of fentanyl and counterfeit medication, bogus online pharmacies and risks associated with purchasing pills online, and the importance of Narcan. Seniors are also instructed on how to safeguard prescription medications within their homes to prevent theft and opportunities for young family members to take pills.

Public Service Campaigns

To raise public awareness about the lethal nature of New York City’s drug market, SNP’s Educational Outreach Committee developed educational materials, including a public service campaign for display on LinkNYC kiosks around the city. The campaign appears in multiple languages, such as English, Spanish, Mandarin, and French. Palm cards and posters are also available for distribution in schools and by not-for-profit organizations.



An English version of SNP’s fentanyl PSA displayed on a Link NYC kiosk (Photo credit: SNP)

Community Initiatives



Ribbon cutting ceremony at the McCaffrey Playground PAL Playstreet in Hell's Kitchen attended by Bridget Brennan and City Councilmember Erik Bottcher (Photo credit: PAL)

SNP seeks to leave a positive footprint on communities where major drug enforcement actions have occurred, by collaborating with the District Attorneys' offices to support youth programs and strengthen communities disrupted by persistent crime.

In the summer of 2024, SNP sponsored two Police Athletic League (PAL) initiatives in Manhattan: A Playstreet at West 124th Street, Lenox to 5th Avenues, in Harlem, and the McCaffrey Playground PAL Playsite, in Hell's Kitchen. Also in 2024, SNP joined Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez in sponsoring cooking equipment for the PAL Wynn Center Healthy Cooking Club in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Playstreets utilize parks and other public areas throughout New York City to give children free and safe supervised places to enjoy fun recreational opportunities, as well as year-round programs. Police officers support PAL programs by engaging in youth interactions that help to promote positive relationships in the community.

Saving lives by reducing overdose deaths is the top priority of SNP. As part of an effort to educate the

public about dangers associated with New York City's unpredictable drug market, and to better understand community concerns, over the past year Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan presented at the Times Square Alliance Meeting and Community Council Meetings for the NYPD's 6th Precinct, 28th Precinct and 32nd Precinct.



Bridget Brennan and Brooklyn DA Eric Gonzalez celebrate the opening of PAL Wynn Center cooking club

Alternatives to Incarceration

The goal of SNP's Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Unit is to promote public safety and reduce recidivism. Through ATI, participants are offered supportive services within the community under a court-supervised plea agreement. For individuals charged with felony drug crimes, an effective drug or mental health treatment program and access to other important social services can mean the difference between repeated contacts with the criminal justice system and the ability to lead a healthy and law-abiding life.

SNP joined the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in expanding its offerings to encompass the Manhattan Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court (ATI Court) beginning in 2020. The ATI Court, which is led by Administrative Judge Ellen Biben, seeks to forge a new response to individuals charged with felonies by linking them to community-based social services. The Court is the first of its kind, providing an innovative model for other jurisdictions seeking to develop and implement meaningful post-conviction sentencing options for individuals facing felony charges.

The ATI Court serves individuals who are charged with felonies and may not be eligible for existing drug and mental health courts. Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis, and treatment is individualized to the specific needs of the participant.

SNP partners with the Center for Justice Innovation's (CJI) Manhattan Justice Opportunities to conduct clinical assessments, develop treatment recommendations, coordinate referrals, and perform compliance monitoring and reporting. ATI Court offers an array of individualized services, including substance abuse treatment, mental health services, cognitive behavioral therapy, educational and vocational training, case management, and various types of prosocial programming.

For FY 2026, we are renewing our funding request for \$218,841 to support ATI programming. We previously submitted our request each year in FY 2023, FY 2024, and FY 2025. These funds will be used to cover costs associated with CJI's Manhattan Justice Opportunities for managing and coordinating the program with Office of Court Administration (OCA).

SNP ATI Unit staff, including ADAs and Case Coordinators, perform screenings of potential participants to determine whether a case is appropriate for a programming disposition. If it is decided that a defendant's case is appropriate, a referral will be made to CJI or other monitoring agency to begin the clinical assessment process.

Once the monitoring agency submits their proposed assessment and treatment recommendations to all legal parties, a mid-assessment conference is held to review/discuss recommendations and set a plea date. The plea agreement mandates participation in services and/or completion of agreed-upon benchmarks for a set period.

Social workers provide neutral, third-party assessments and case management services to the ATI Court. They conduct independent clinical assessments, provide referrals to community-based services, offer comprehensive clinical case management, and monitor participant compliance.

Judicial Diversion

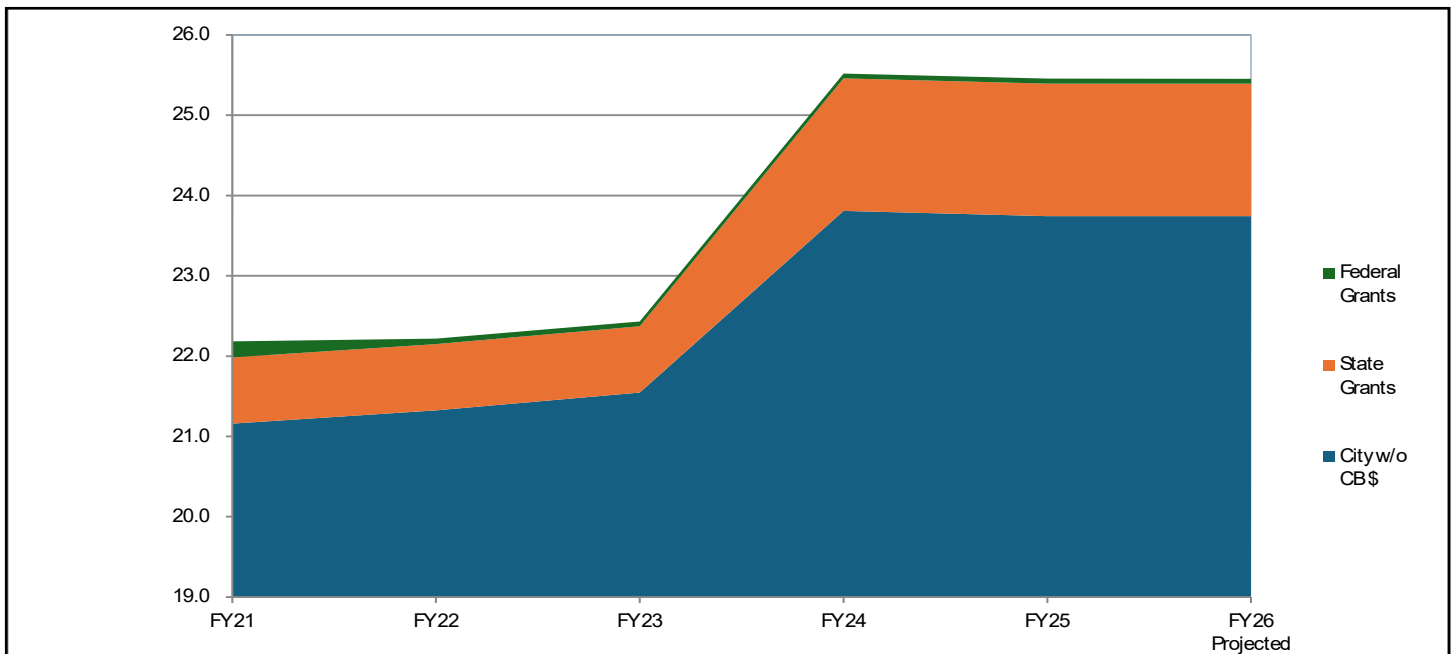
Beginning in 2009, the New York State Legislature empowered judges to place defendants in court-sponsored diversion programs. SNP continues to offer its expertise in screening and monitoring. When individuals enter treatment through one of these paths, their sentences are deferred. Upon successful completion, charges may be dismissed.

Prosecutor-Led Diversion Programs

Our office is proud to have been at the forefront of developing ATI programs for more than 35 years. SNP and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office were pioneers in diverting those whose crimes (often street sales of drugs) were motivated by their own substance use disorder.

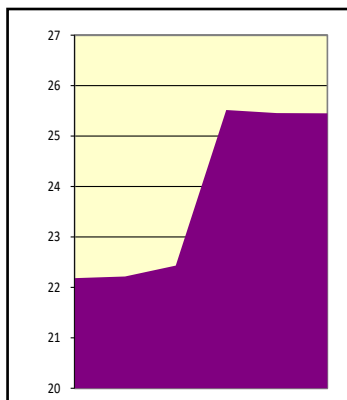
Funding

Special Narcotics Prosecutor FY 2021 Modified to FY 2026 Projected (in millions - CB funds excluded)



Overall Funding Outlook

SNP Funds (in millions)



FY 2021 Modified to FY 2026 Projected

cause for concern, as they could impact all levels of funding sources.

For FY 2025, we received the same amount of grant funds as we did in FY 2024. In the Executive Budget for FY 2025, we received nearly \$2 million in collective bargaining funding following the Mayor's Personnel Order (MPO) issued in February 2024. These funds were used to pay for salary increases for exempt-titled staff for five years from 2021 to 2025.

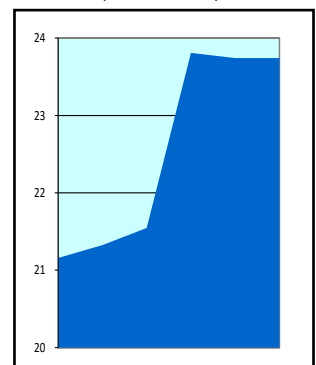
According to the City's Preliminary Budget proposed for the next fiscal year, FY 2026, our City funding will remain approximately the same as the current fiscal year. We hope that our grant funds will be renewed in FY 2026 at the same level as in FY 2025. However, drastic fiscal changes proposed by the new administration in Washington are

City Funding Needs

Since 2020, we have been challenged by the significant changes made to the New York State Discovery Laws and worked tirelessly to ensure we comply with the new Criminal Justice Reform (CJR) Discovery requirements. These significant changes continued to be much more time-consuming and costly than originally anticipated. While the District Attorneys' offices have experienced less attrition and much higher recruitment over the past year, we continue to grapple with a legal staffing shortage. Though we were able to increase our headcount by 7% over the past year, we are falling behind the other offices. We are working diligently on recruiting and hope to receive a larger class of new attorneys in 2025.

As always, we are very grateful for the support of the City Council. With your assistance, we received \$2.2

City Funds (in millions)



FY 2021 Modified to FY 2026 Projected

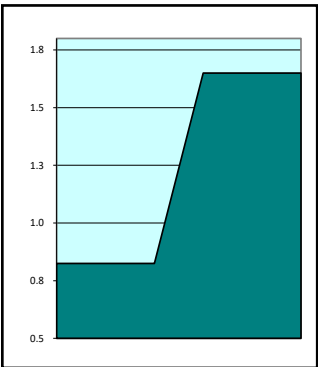
million in Discovery funding for FY 2024-25. These funds helped us with recruitment and retention, while supporting our efforts in complying with Discovery and CJR requirements.

For FY 2026, we are renewing our funding request for \$218,841 to support our Alternatives to Incarceration programming. As mentioned previously, we submitted a request for funding for treatment and diversion each year in FY 2023, FY 2024, and FY 2025. These funds will be used to cover costs associated with CJJ’s Manhattan Justice Opportunities for managing and coordinating the program with the Office of Court Administration (OCA).

We also requested \$150,000 in capital funding to upgrade radios for our investigators to facilitate compatibility with the NYPD’s radio system in FY 2025. This request is pending and under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We would like to renew this request for FY 2026.

State Funding Changes

State funds
(in millions)



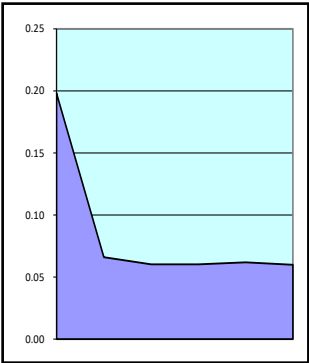
*FY 2021 Modified to FY 2026
Projected*

We continue to be short funded in comparison to the city’s five District Attorneys’ offices and District Attorneys across New York State. In the current fiscal year, FY 2025, our SNP (Aid to Prosecution) program funding remained the same at \$825,000, while State Aids to Prosecution funding for other District Attorneys’ offices increased by 300% on average. We have since received an additional \$825,000 in Discovery funding from the State to help us recruit and retain staff. Although our State funding is still not proportional to funding of the other prosecutors’ offices, we hope to receive the same level of State funding in FY 2026 as in FY 2025. In FY 2025, we received a one-time anti-fentanyl grant for \$2.5 million dollars. These funds will support our statewide anti-fentanyl initiative over the next few years.

Federal Funding Updates

Our federal funding declined drastically over the years from \$843,059 in FY 2013 to slightly over \$60,000 in FY 2025. In FY 2018 and FY 2019, we did not receive any federal funding due to our sanctuary city status. For the next fiscal year, FY 2026, we anticipate receiving about the same amount as in the current fiscal year.

Federal funds
(in millions)



*FY 2021 Modified to FY 2026
Projected*

Case Highlights

Fentanyl and Lethal Mixtures

Active Fentanyl/Heroin Packaging Operation Disrupted

Law enforcement officers disrupted an active fentanyl packaging operation in a 9th floor apartment in the Bronx, where over 13 pounds of illicit drug mixtures were seized. As members of NYDETF and SNP's Investigators Unit worked to open the apartment door, which was secured by multiple deadbolt locks, officers stationed outside 2300 Olinville Avenue observed what appeared to be bags of narcotics being flung from a 9th floor window. Approximately 10 bags of narcotics and other substances were recovered from the ground, while another seven bags were found on neighboring balconies on the 7th and 8th floors. Subsequent DEA laboratory analysis determined these bags contained various mixtures and quantities of fentanyl, heroin, xylazine, methamphetamine and cocaine, as well as other substances. The apartment contained all the equipment necessary for packaging drugs, including empty glassine envelopes, strainers, grinders, and kilogram press devices. Three individuals present in the apartment were charged.



Vacuum sealed bags with narcotics mixtures, including fentanyl, heroin, xylazine, meth and cocaine
(Photo credit: NYDETF)

Narcotics Mixtures Branded “Tesla” and “Playboy”



Powdered opioid mixtures packaged into glassines stamped with the brand names “Tesla” and “Playboy”
(Photo credit: NY OCDEF)

An undercover investigation that began with a large cocaine sale resulted in the seizure of a gun and over 15 pounds of narcotics from a drug stash house in the Bronx. A cache of drug mixtures, including combinations of heroin, fentanyl, cocaine and xylazine, were uncovered in a basement apartment on Lawrence Avenue in the Parkchester neighborhood of the Bronx. During a planned sale to an undercover officer, two individuals were arrested by agents and officers with the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force. One of the men had allegedly agreed to sell two kilograms of cocaine to the undercover, who was instructed to meet at the apartment building. Agents and officers observed one man on the roof of an adjacent garage toss a black bag to another man standing in

an outdoor yard. The bag contained the cocaine. A subsequent search of the basement apartment resulted in the seizure of a 9mm pistol with an extended magazine, and approximately 10 pounds of narcotics with a street value of over \$250,000. Glassine envelopes containing opioid mixtures were stamped with the brand names “Playboy” and “Tesla.” The apartment also contained all the equipment and materials used in packaging heroin/fentanyl.

Major Fentanyl and Meth Operation Near Daycare Center

A large-scale fentanyl processing and distribution operation was uncovered inside a 1st floor apartment located down the hall from a daycare center in the Belmont neighborhood of the Bronx. One man was arrested and charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker. Over 17 kilograms (more than 37 pounds) of fentanyl mixtures were recovered during undercover sales and a search of the apartment by the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force and SNP’s Investigators Unit. During the search, law enforcement officers removed the lid of a cooler and powder inside was released into the air in the apartment. Some law enforcement officers began displaying various symptoms and emergency services were called to the scene. Children from the daycare were evacuated as a precaution, as were nearby residents. Subsequent laboratory analysis on more than 12 kilograms of narcotics recovered from the 1st floor apartment identified a combination of fentanyl and methamphetamine, with xylazine and/or heroin present in some instances.



*A cooler containing powdered narcotics that caused officers to experience symptoms of exposure
(Photo credit: NY OCDESF)*



More than a dozen kilograms of narcotics recovered from a 1st floor apartment near a daycare

Cocaine Sales in Bushwick Lead to Carfentanil Seizure

A long-term undercover investigation into cocaine trafficking in Bushwick, Brooklyn led to the seizure of potentially lethal drug mixtures, including heroin, fentanyl and carfentanil, a highly potent opioid that is 100 times stronger than fentanyl. A man allegedly sold cocaine during 12 meetings with a undercover



Carfentanil mixed with heroin and fentanyl, and ingredients for “pink cocaine,” in Bushwick
(Photo credit: NYPD)

officer from the NYPD’s Narcotics Borough Brooklyn. Most sales occurred at the man’s Bushwick Avenue apartment. In a subsequent court-authorized search, officers found more than 100 packages and containers drug mixtures, different substances and hundreds of pills scattered throughout the residence. Approximately \$50,000 cash was also seized, along with drug paraphernalia. NYPD laboratory analysis identified additional mixtures of ketamine and MDMA, ingredients of “pink cocaine.” Tablets proved to contain methamphetamine and oxycodone. In total, more than a kilogram of cocaine (over 2.5 pounds) and more than half a pound of other substances were seized in the investigation.

Major Trafficker in Williamsburg, Brooklyn

A resident of Williamsburg, Brooklyn was charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker after an eight-month wiretap investigation. Members of NYDETF Group T-11 uncovered a stash of over 85 pounds of cocaine and fentanyl, eight guns, and \$420,000. Dozens of kilograms of cocaine and fentanyl marked with luxury brand names were recovered from a Honda parked at 151 Leonard Street, a building owned by the defendant. Packages of cocaine were labelled “MOËT” and “AMIRI,” while fentanyl bore Louis Vuitton symbols. A small amount of the fentanyl had been dyed pink. All eight loaded firearms, as well as an imitation pistol, were also found inside the Honda. Three of these guns were inside a hidden compartment. Law enforcement also recovered approximately \$395,000 of alleged narcotics proceeds.



Kilogram packages of fentanyl, eight guns, \$420,000 cash and a kilogram press displayed on table
(Photo credit: NYDETF)

Cocaine

Major Seizure of 360 Lbs. of Cocaine from Tractor Trailer

A tractor trailer carrying a huge 360-pound load of cocaine was intercepted in the Bronx. Agents with DEA New Jersey Division, Enforcement Group 2, were conducting surveillance as part of an investigation into interstate narcotics trafficking when they observed a black Maxx-D Trailer stop in the vicinity of 1591 233rd Street in the Bronx. Moments later, a gray Jeep Cherokee arrived at the location. An alleged New York City based narcotics distributor exited the Jeep and engaged in conversation with the two men in the trailer. For the next 10 minutes, he went in and out of the Jeep in preparation for towing the trailer. He then instructed the two men to move the trailer down to street. DEA agents intervened and took the trailer and Jeep into custody pending a search warrant application. A court-authorized search by members of DEA and the NYPD's Queens North Narcotics Major Case uncovered 163 packaged kilograms of narcotics in a trap compartment inside the base of the trailer. The Jeep contained \$30,000 cash. The alleged distributor faces charges of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees.



A load of 163 kilograms of cocaine recovered from a trap in a trailer, including some packages labeled with images of the famous soccer player Christano Ronaldo and F-22 (Photo credit: DEA NJ)

Over 40 Lbs. of Cocaine Intercepted in Multi-State Probe



Wrapped kilograms of cocaine (Photo credit: NYDETF)

Agents and officers arrested a man with 20 kilograms (over 40 pounds) of cocaine in a Jeep Grand Cherokee after tracking the vehicle on a circuitous route through three states and across the George Washington Bridge (GWB) twice in a single day. During the short-term investigation into interstate narcotics trafficking, members of NYDETF Group T-41, tracked the Jeep southbound on I-95 from the New York State/Connecticut border, through New York City, and into New Jersey. Agents and officers observed the vehicle meet up with a large tractor trailer at the Alexander Hamilton Travel Plaza, in Secaucus.

The Jeep then traveled back across the GWB and up the Major Deegan Expressway into the Bronx, where it was stopped by members of NYDETF. Agents and officers recovered 20 kilograms of cocaine from a duffel bag, and arrested the driver, a resident of Worcester, Mass. Some powder was imprinted the labels “Mobil 1” and “Manga.” An indictment charges the driver with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees.

Over 45 Lbs. of Narcotics Seized in Hell’s Kitchen and Yonkers

Three individuals pled guilty to felony narcotics possession charges linked to seizure of 21 kilograms of cocaine and one kilogram of heroin (over 45 pounds of narcotics) in Hell’s Kitchen in Manhattan and Yonkers in Westchester. Through physical and electronic surveillance, members of NYDETF and SNP’s investigators saw the defendants remove narcotics from a Storage Post facility on Saw Mill River Road. They then drove to a residence in Yonkers, and finally to Hell’s Kitchen. Agents and officers seized six kilograms of cocaine and one kilogram of heroin on 10th Avenue in Manhattan after one defendant retrieved a bag from a Chevrolet Traverse. A subsequent court-authorized search of a storage unit at Storage Post-Yonkers resulted in the seizure of 14 kilograms of cocaine. An additional kilogram of cocaine and a gun were recovered from another defendant’s residence in White Plains. The gun was found inside a cooler in a backyard gazebo. Sentencing is pending for two defendants, while the third was sentenced to 3 ½ years in prison for Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree.



*Vacuum-sealed kilograms of cocaine and heroin
(Photo credit: NYDETF)*

Safes Contained Cocaine and Fentanyl in Middle Village



Multiple sealed safes contained 23 kilograms of cocaine (Photo credit: DEA NJ)

A Queens man was arrested after multiple locked safes containing approximately 23 kilograms of cocaine (50 pounds) were found in the trunk of his Toyota Highlander. The cocaine was seized by members of DEA New Jersey, Enforcement Group 2, after agents observed the Toyota travel from New Jersey to a parking garage on Woodhaven Boulevard in Middle Village, Queens. A small quantity of fentanyl was also found inside the Toyota. Agents then searched the defendant’s residence at 62-98 Woodhaven Boulevard, an apartment building adjacent to the parking garage. A safe in the bedroom closet contained approximately 150 glassine envelopes of fentanyl, as well as \$4,000 cash. Laboratory analysis performed by the NYPD indicated the presence of xylazine in the fentanyl mixture.

Large Cache of Cocaine and \$3 Million Hidden in Furniture

An accused major narcotics trafficker stashed 12 kilograms (more than 26 pounds) of cocaine and over \$3 million cash inside several pieces of furniture at his residence in Norwood, Bronx. Members of SNP Investigators Unit and NYDETF Group T-23 stopped the suspect in the lobby of an apartment building on Gates Place following a two-month investigation. A New York State Police K9 Unit assisted agents and officers with a court-authorized search of the apartment and discovered dressers, nightstands, and a coffee table contained large hidden compartments stuffed with cash. Bundles of bills were labeled with dates spanning several years. The 12 kilograms of cocaine and at least 10 luxury watches, some by Roex and Cartier, were found in the coffee table and a nightstand.



Over \$3 million cash and 12 kilograms of cocaine displayed on table (Photo credit: NYDETF)



Cash hidden in trap compartments found in furniture

Nearly 90 Pounds of Cocaine Seized in Queens



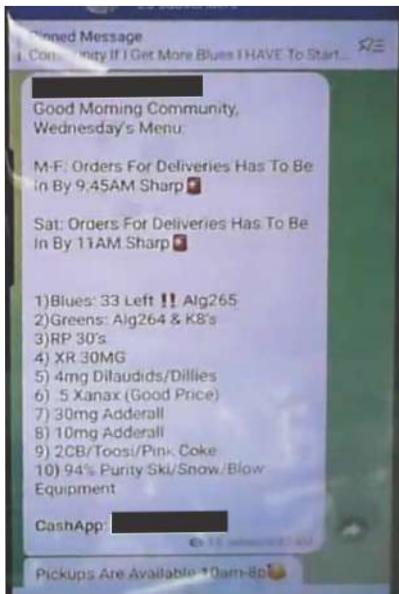
Kilogram packages labeled "JMY2" found in suitcase (Photo credit: DEA NY)

An investigation in Queens led to the seizure of nearly 40 kilograms (90 pounds) of cocaine and the arrest of an accused major trafficker and a second individual. Agents and officers with DEA New York Division Group D-43 were conducting surveillance outside a residential building at 37-63 81st Street in Jackson Heights when they observed a man leave with a green shopping bag and drive off in a Chrysler. A second man in the car later transferred the bag to a Toyota Sienna. Agents stopped the Toyota and recovered the bag with three kilograms of cocaine inside. A court-authorized search of 37-63 81st Street, Apartment 4R, led to the seizure of over 80 pounds of cocaine. Kilogram packages labeled "JMY2" found in a suitcase matched those found in the car.

Emergence of “Pink Cocaine”

Upper East Side Woman Sold “Pink Cocaine” via Telegram

An undercover investigation into illicit sales of prescription pills and “pink cocaine” led to the arrest of an Upper East Side woman who allegedly advertised through the messaging app Telegram. Menus posted on Telegram listed various drugs for sale, as well deadlines for placing orders and instructions for paying through CashApp. On approximately 10 occasions, the woman allegedly sold various types of drugs – including “pink cocaine,” cocaine, and the prescription pills oxycodone and hydromorphone (Dilaudid) – to an undercover officer. Sales were conducted in-person or through the mail. The final sale occurred in the vicinity of the woman’s residence at 1410 York Avenue. A court authorized search of her apartment yielded drug packaging materials and other paraphernalia. Subsequent laboratory analysis of the “pink cocaine” showed the contents were different depending on the day, containing ketamine alone, ketamine/MDMA, or ketamine/MDMA/cocaine.



“Menu” of drugs sent to customers on the encrypted app, Telegram (Photo credit: HSI NY)



A bag of “pink cocaine” on a scale

Large “Pink Cocaine” Seizure in Meatpacking District



A plastic bag containing a pink powder identified as ketamine (Photo credit: NYDETF)

A short-term investigation by NYDETF resulted in the seizure of approximately 10 pounds of ketamine packaged as “pink cocaine” from inside a Toyota Highlander. Agents and officers observed a man carrying a backpack climb into the Toyota on Gansevoort Street in Manhattan’s Meatpacking District. Members of NYDETF Group T-12 detained the man and found the backpack contained dozens of small plastic packages of pink powder. A small quantity of crystal methamphetamine was also recovered from the man’s jacket pocket. Laboratory analysis identified the pink powder as ketamine. Because the pos-

session of ketamine and methamphetamine are not bail-eligible offenses under New York State law, the man was released on supervised release at the time of his arraignment. He subsequently failed to appear on a scheduled court date and a judge ordered a bench warrant. Six months have passed, and the defendant has not returned to court and has not been located.

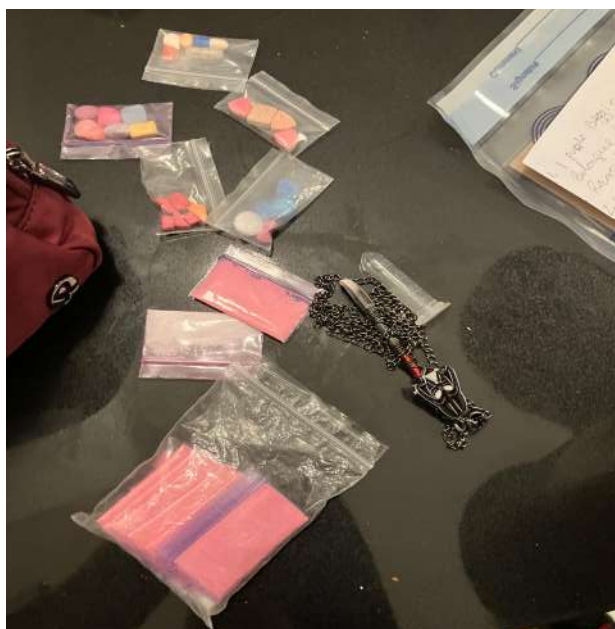
NJ Man Sold Eight Guns, Cocaine and “Pink Cocaine”

A long-term undercover investigation resulted in the arrest of a New Jersey man who allegedly sold eight guns, cocaine and “pink cocaine” at locations across Manhattan. The man communicated with the undercover officer via WhatsApp to arrange the sales, and the two met on nine occasions. The man engaged in counter surveillance maneuvers, such as changing his clothing and meeting places. He directed the undercover to various locations in Harlem, Hell’s Kitchen, the vicinity of Central Park and Greenwich Village. Sales resulted in the seizure of approximately 600 grams of cocaine and “pink cocaine,” in addition to the guns. Laboratory analysis on the “pink cocaine,” also known by the street name “tusi,” indicated the presence of ketamine and MDMA. The investigation was conducted by the NYPD’s Narcotics Borough Manhattan North Major Case, DEA New York Division Group D-24 and SNP Investigators Unit.



*Two loaded guns, cocaine, and “pink cocaine” displayed
(Photo credit: NYPD/DEA NY)*

“Pink Cocaine” Stashed in Hell’s Kitchen Luxury Apartment



“Pink cocaine” and hallucinogens (Photo credit: NYPD)

An investigation that began with six alleged sales of cocaine by a Hell’s Kitchen resident led to the seizure of “pink cocaine” from the man’s luxury apartment, located at 550 West 54th Street. During a court-authorized search, officers with the NYPD’s Narcotics Borough Manhattan South found “pink cocaine” stashed throughout the apartment, including inside a safe and in kitchen drawers. Laboratory analysis identified various mixtures, including ketamine alone, ketamine/MDMA/cocaine, and ketamine/methamphetamine. The search also resulted in the seizure of quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, the hallucinogenic drug 2C-B (sometimes called “tusi”), psilocybin mushrooms, GBL and approximately \$96,000 cash.

Methamphetamine

Major Methamphetamine Load Seized in Hell's Kitchen



40 pounds of methamphetamine packaged in heat-sealed cylinders (Photo credit: NYDETF)

Over 40 pounds of methamphetamine were recovered from a Mercedes-Benz SUV in Hell's Kitchen during an investigation by NYDETF. Agents and officers were conducting surveillance when they observed a suspect enter the passenger seat of the Mercedes, which was parked in the vicinity of 722 10th Avenue. A second vehicle, a Chevrolet Malibu, pulled in front of the Mercedes, and an individual climbed out and spoke to the man in the Mercedes. He then placed a large box inside the trunk of the Mercedes before entering that vehicle himself. Members of NYDETF approached the Mercedes and detained both men. They recovered the box from the trunk and saw it contained 19 cylindrical

heat-sealed packages. DEA laboratory analysis identified the substance inside the packages as approximately 40 pounds of methamphetamine. The defendants were released without bail being set, as possession of methamphetamine is not a bail eligible offense under New York State law, regardless of the quantity.

Over 110 Lbs. of Meth Seized: Fugitive Wanted

Members of NYDETF recovered approximately 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of crystal methamphetamine, carrying an estimated \$600,000 street value, from a Chevrolet Tahoe at West Street and Battery Place in Lower Manhattan. Agents and officers were conducting an investigation into interstate drug trafficking when they stopped the vehicle and found the meth inside two large duffel bags in the rear seat. A Pennsylvania man driving the vehicle was arrested and charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree. He was released without bail being set at his arraignment, because the possession of methamphetamine is not a bail eligible offense under New York State law. He failed to attend a subsequent court appearance and the judge issued a bench warrant. The man remains at large six months later.



Over 110 pounds of crystal meth in sealed plastic bags (Photo credit: NYDETF)

Thirty-Eight Lbs. of Meth and Cocaine in Luxury Apartment

A court-authorized search of a luxury apartment at 550 West 54th Street in Manhattan resulted in the seizure of approximately 30 pounds of methamphetamine and four kilograms (over eight pounds) of cocaine. The large load of drugs, worth more than \$1.1 million, was packed inside a suitcase in a bedroom closet. More than \$27,000 cash and two vacuum-sealing machines were found in two other closets. Two individuals were arrested at the building by members of the NYDETF Group T-43. One man was taken into custody inside the 27th floor apartment when agents and officers entered. The other individual was stopped in the building's lobby prior to the search. Both men pled guilty to Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and were sentenced to serve four years in prison.



More than \$27,000 cash found in closets in a luxury apartment in Hell's Kitchen (Photo credit: NYDETF)



A suitcase containing approximately 38 pounds of methamphetamine and cocaine

Psychedelics

Investigation Targets Open Drug Activity Inside Washington Square Park

Nine individuals were arrested following an investigation into the sale of psychedelic psilocybin mushrooms and cocaine in the vicinity of Washington Square Park. The undercover investigation by the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Manhattan South began in response to community complaints about open drug activity inside the busy public park, located in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. The majority of the alleged drug sellers were associated with a loosely affiliated street crew operating in afternoon and evening shifts to sell psilocybin mushrooms, cocaine and crack cocaine. In total, the defendants are charged in connection with more than a dozen sales to undercover officers. Several of the defendants pled guilty and received sentences ranging from probation to 2 ½ years in prison or are awaiting sentencing. Others have been evaluated for drug treatment programming.



Table selling mushrooms, cocaine and crack cocaine in front of memorial (Photo credit: NYPD)

International Money Laundering

International Money Laundering Operation Dismantled

Two members of a Colombian money laundering organization that operated in Madrid, Spain and New York City were sentenced to prison following a long-term investigation. The case began with the seizure of approximately one million Euros (\$1.15 million) in drug proceeds in Madrid following a transaction with a Spanish undercover in 2018. NYDETF Group T-43 and DEA's Bogotá Country Office tracked the illicit money to the two money brokers in Cali, Colombia. The investigation revealed the money brokers personally threatened an individual whom they blamed for the loss of the drug proceeds. They then hired La Oficina de Envigado, a violent organization once used by Pablo Escobar, the deceased leader of the Medellín Cartel, to collect the debt. Law enforcement intervened when this organization made further threats of physical harm against this individual and the individual's family. The two money brokers were arrested in Colombia and ultimately pled guilty to money laundering charges filed by SNP in New York City. One man, while still in custody in Colombia, appeared virtually for his sentencing before a Manhattan Supreme Court Judge -- the first time the Colombian government approved such a procedure by a court within the U.S. He received a sentence of 3-9 years in prison to be served in New York State. This virtual proceeding was facilitated with assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs. The other man was sentenced to 2-6 years in prison after being extradited from Colombia. El Cuerpo Técnico De Investigación (CTI) Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) Police, Colombia, and the Spanish National Police also participated in the investigation.

**Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety
Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam, and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Deanna Logan. I am Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ).

I am joined today by Nora Daniel, Chief of Staff, Robert Fiato, Chief Financial Officer, and Candice Julien, Chief Operating Officer.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss MOCJ's Fiscal Year 26 (FY26) preliminary budget and priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

MOCJ is the think tank that advises the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Public Safety on strategies to improve efficiency and fairness in the criminal legal system. MOCJ is also an implementing agency that turns those ideas into actual services that benefit our communities and residents.

Recognizing that public safety is a collaboration between many stakeholders, we bring together entities involved in the legal system, city agencies, state actors, nonprofit partners and community members to address issues that undermine the stability of our neighborhoods.

For FY 26, MOCJ's preliminary budget allocates 787 million dollars toward our services that include re-entry pathways, transitional housing, alternatives to incarceration, pretrial services, indigent defense services, the Office of Special Enforcement, and the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes.

Re-entry is a critical component of the criminal justice continuum. Individuals leaving incarceration face significant barriers to housing, employment, healthcare, and education. That's what makes our community-based re-entry programs essential to long-term success...and safety.

MOCJ invests 26 million dollars a year in re-entry programs, including discharge planning on Rikers Island, job training, and holistic wraparound services.

We use the word 'investing,' because re-entry programs are supporting individuals' successful returns to the community. Stronger communities mean safer communities for all New Yorkers.

MOCJ's interventions not only reduce recidivism, but also emphasize accountability and the root causes of negative behavior. We invest 32 million dollars annually in "Alternatives to Incarceration" programs – known as "ATI's" -- across the five boroughs.

These programs provide services -- including connection to mental health and substance misuse treatment – to more than 5,000 New Yorkers each year, helping safely reduce incarceration rates, which ultimately saves taxpayer dollars.

Affording individuals the ability to remain in their communities while receiving the services they need to succeed helps improve outcomes for justice-involved individuals -- and their families.

In 2016, MOCJ launched the Supervised Release Program as a pretrial option in New York City. This program provides judges with the option of structured supervision, to boost court attendance while simultaneously addressing participants' needs.

We've maintained and improved those programs since 2020 with our contracted partners across all five boroughs, supporting individuals as they navigate the criminal legal system – while affording them the opportunity to remain engaged in their communities, rather than being detained.

It's working. Tens of thousands of individuals a year are supervised through:

- Regular check-ins with case managers;
- Court reminders and legal assistance;

- Mental health and substance use referrals;
- Employment and educational support.

Consistent with Mayor Adams' vision of public safety as the prerequisite to prosperity, MOCJ understands that individuals we support require housing stability as the foundation for their success. Without a stable place to live, individuals leaving incarceration are far more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, and may reoffend.

MOCJ is committed to ensuring that these individuals have access to stable housing options. Our transitional housing initiative is one of the city's most significant investments in reentry support in recent years.

Building on the success of our COVID-19 emergency housing initiative, we evolved housing supports into a sustainable model of transitional housing, to meet people where they are and provide a direct pathway to permanent housing.

Here we see return on our investment: Transitional housing doesn't just provide a bed—it is providing a foundation for stability, safety, and success. In 2022, we moved over 250 individuals into permanent housing thanks to our sister agency HPD, provider partners, and Emergency Housing Vouchers.

In support of housing for all New Yorkers, MOCJ's Office of Special Enforcement plays a critical role in helping achieve Mayor Adams' goal of maintaining affordable housing options. The office fully implemented Local Law 18 of 2022, the short-term rental registration law, preventing the illegal short-term rentals that destabilize neighborhoods and undermine the City's housing supply.

The Office of Special Enforcement conducts its work in conjunction with the Department of Buildings and the Fire Department to maintain the integrity of the City's rental market to ensure that housing remains safe, habitable, and available for New Yorkers.

MOCJ's Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes performs critical work to address and prevent bias-related incidents. New York City is a leader on these efforts in our

state and across our nation. Hate crimes and bias incidents threaten the mosaic and cohesion of our communities.

We work closely with NYPD, local organizations, national consortiums of cities, and impacted communities to provide education, support and interventions following hate crimes and bias incidents.

We also fund community-based anti-hate initiatives through “Partners Against the Hate,” also referred to as PATH. It includes programs focused on the needs of women and girls, education, and youth engagement.

Working with the Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs, we fund the “Breaking Bread, Building Bonds” program, an initiative Mayor Adams began as Borough President, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds to foster dialogue and understanding through shared meals - ultimately creating a safer, more unified city.

MOCJ’s proud history of innovation continues undaunted. For example, we created the “Intensive Case Management” model to address individuals with higher needs mandated to Supervised Release Program.

Another example is “Project Restore Bed-Stuy,” which invested in -- and graduated -- a cohort of 30 wonderful young men from a collaborative-focused deterrence model, providing off-ramps from gun and gang violence. Partners included the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office, Columbia University Center for Justice, Bridge Street Development Corporation and Community Organization Both Sides of the Violence. This is one of the most promising models for disrupting cycles of violence.

We must never compromise an individual’s right to quality representation when accused of a crime -- regardless of ability to pay. Which is why MOCJ, tasked with administering the city’s indigent defense portfolio, works closely with the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services (ILS) to effectively administer funding to providers. We also manage the city’s conflict counsel, known as the “Assigned Counsel Plan.”

As part of our transition to our own agency, MOCJ reorganized its personnel resources to create a dedicated team of professionals in our legal division focused on contracts, invoicing, and payments for this large portfolio. Collaborating with our Contracts and Fiscal teams, Fiscal Year 25 contracts were registered timely, and we are on track for the timely registration in FY26.

As I alluded to, the new fiscal year marks a significant milestone for MOCJ: the finalization of our own agency code.

This code facilitated the establishment of our key administrative functions, including the critical build-out of dedicated Human Resources and IT teams to support our innovative work. It's allowing us to continue providing resources — for the long-term — to our nonprofit partners, as well as the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Perhaps most importantly, it makes us more efficient. By expanding our technological capabilities, it ensures our policies and initiatives are guided by empirical evidence and real-time analysis.

Our work, from re-entry services to community safety initiatives, is grounded in the belief that healthy neighborhoods are the foundation of a safe city. And our collaboration with the stakeholders throughout the criminal legal system is helping us to identify barriers, tailor solutions, and ensure a holistic public safety strategy.

MOCJ and the Mayor remain committed to investing in people as a pathway to public safety – and with a front-row seat to how those investments are providing return – I'm confident MOCJ is well-positioned to further enhance its impact in the years ahead – benefiting all New Yorkers

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and for your continued partnership in advancing justice and safety. I welcome your questions and look forward to discussing how we can further our shared goals.

Office of the District Attorney, Bronx County

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

**The Council of the City of New York
Committees on Finance and Public Safety**

March 11, 2025



Pursuing Justice with Integrity

**Darcel D. Clark
District Attorney**

We submit our requests for funding and financial support from our City government clear in our mission and resolute to fight for the very soul of the Bronx. Despite what the Police Commissioner, defense attorneys, legislators or the media may believe, the district attorney is the chief law enforcement officer in the Bronx. We have been entrusted by the electorate with the important work of protecting the public. We will do the good work of our constituents without apology. We work for them, we answer to them, and we serve them with integrity.

Every effort we can make to reduce recidivism is a laudable goal and deserves serious consideration. Our decades of experience doing this work, however, tells us that we must not revert to the failed policies and practices of “broken windows” policing. Punitive measures and the over enforcement of minor quality of life offenses did not stem the tide of recidivism or violence. A zero-tolerance initiative did not address the root causes of crime. Rather, these measures burdened the system with mass arrests and court proceedings for offenses that are not bail eligible and ought not to result in a jail sentence. Indeed, these enforcement tactics, which were usually implemented in poorer communities of color, led to unfair treatment and mass incarceration. And they engendered a distrust of the police and City government. We are still paying the price for the broken relationships and lack of trust with the people we serve. “Broken windows” policing was wrong then and it is wrong now.

We must instead look ahead to 21st century solutions that will keep the Bronx safe. We want people to be held accountable for their conduct. When incarceration is appropriate in a particular case, we should consider whether the individual will leave jail or prison with the same unmet needs and without the skills or a pathway for success. We must look at each person, with dignity and humanity. Moreover, not every risk to public safety can or should be solved by incarceration. We simply cannot prosecute our way out of every problem. The real solutions are complex and layered. We need to use every tool in our toolbox to achieve public safety.

We must start by identifying the root causes of crime and addressing the conditions that lead to a cycle of violence and recidivism. Our borough is traditionally under-resourced and underserved. That remains true today. To tackle the outsized share of violent crime that Bronx residents and businesses experience, our community needs more resources. We need more police on patrol. We need more detectives to solve the crimes and gather evidence. We need precision enforcement and community engagement. We need to invest in our communities and build the infrastructure, the services, and systems that support people and help them to acquire the skills and the tools to pursue a positive future. We must bring critical resources to our Bronx community so that we have the kind of wraparound services, treatment, training, and job opportunities that are healing, preventative, and ameliorative, not punitive. We want

to build our community up and help people get the skills and support they need to improve their lives so that crime and violence are not an option.

We all must work together. That means all stakeholders, elected officials, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the courts, the police, businesses, clergy, and the community. In calling out the shortcomings of the discovery laws, prosecutors are not fear mongering. Nor are we peddling untruths. We are relying on data that is collected and provided by the courts. People may disagree with us, but when we vilify one another, we devalue and undermine the good work that government can do. We must instead find common ground so that we can solve real people's real problems and build something positive together.

We support the Governor's proposed amendments to the discovery law. We recognize and embrace the benefits of broader discovery and turning over discovery material early in the life of a case. But it would be irresponsible for us to allow criminal cases to be dismissed indiscriminately based on the unintended consequences of the law. We know what is wrong and we know how to fix it. The Governor's proposed changes will alleviate the overly harsh, unintended consequences of the current statute by creating a process that is both fair and balanced.

We thank the Mayor and City Council for their continued support of our Office and the work we are doing to serve the community. With resources you have provided, we added new attorneys and trial preparation assistants, funded Information

Technology initiatives, and increased the services we are able to provide to crime victims. Notably, we have been building—and are preparing soon to implement—the NICE Justice discovery platform and a new case management system. These innovations—which are a tremendous step forward—will allow bureaus across the office to collaborate, organize and share documents, and make discovery as seamless and efficient as possible.

It is our continued mission to be responsible stewards and to make the best possible use of the resources we receive. We are constantly assessing efficiency and value. We are responding, as we must, to the evolving demands and often unfunded mandates of the Legislature and the criminal justice system. We are thinking creatively and looking for new solutions and innovations. We recognize that our partners in New York City government face similar challenges, and we appreciate the opportunity to work together to serve the people of the Bronx.

In order to continue our work and to better tackle the persistent violence in the Bronx, we are requesting a total of \$25M in our baseline budget to support a staffing increase of 187 positions. We are also separately requesting the City to support the South Bronx Community Justice Center by funding the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) \$2M a year to contract with the Center for Justice Innovation (CJI).

BRONX CRIME DATA

To provide greater context to our requests, let us take stock of the year that has passed. In 2024, the NYPD submitted 47,796 arrests to our office for prosecution. This is an 11% increase since 2023 and a 35% increase since 2022. 9,050 arrests were for violent felony crimes, which is a 6% increase from the prior year.

As a group, the incidence of index crimes—murder, rape, robbery, felony assault, burglary, grand larceny, and grand larceny auto—has grown over the past six years. The incidents of these crimes in the Bronx totaled 30,624, which is a 1% increase over 2023 and a 55% increase since 2019. The numbers for violent offenses are also startling. In 2024, there were 123 homicides, which is a 2% increase from the number of homicides in the borough last year. There were 5,691 arrests for violent felony assaults (a 9% annual increase). There were 2,336 violent felony robbery arrests (a 4% increase). Last year in the Bronx, there were 1,160 arrests for gun offenses, and a 7% increase in shootings (338 incidents) from 2023.

Bronx County has been disproportionately affected by the increase in violent crimes. The county has approximately 1.4 million residents, a 17% share of New York City's population. The 2024 crime levels indicate the Bronx's per capita share outpaces the rest of the City. 25% of the City's index crimes occur in the Bronx. The Bronx had

32% of citywide murders, 26% of citywide UCR Rape,¹ 30% of all robberies, 29% of all felony assaults, and 37% of all shooting incidents in New York City. 38% of the victims of shooting incidents live in the Bronx. Last year, 92% of homicide victims and 96% of all non-fatal shootings were Black or Hispanic (Homicide victims – 47% Black, 45% Hispanic; non-fatal shooting victims – 55% Black, 41% Hispanic).

GUN VIOLENCE

As noted, last year, there were 338 shooting incidents, which is a 7% increase from 2023. The total number of arrests for gun offenses last year was 1,160. In addition to more traditional prosecution tools, we have utilized two approved diversion programs to address gun violence. They are BOGAP (Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention program) and the Fortune Enhanced Gun Diversion Program. Both programs were post-plea in Supreme Court. Treatment and programming included case management services, group therapy, alternative to violence counselling/therapy, job readiness training, and connections to employment. Eligible defendants were between 16-25 years of age (with some flexibility up to the age of 30) who had been indicted on a simple possession gun case. The individuals were not predicate violent felons and did not have significant substance use or mental health disorders.

¹ UCR refers to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program which defines rape as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without consent of the victim." NYPD started using this definition in 2019.

To date, we have graduated 100 participants from these programs. We believe that our community has benefited from the BOGAP and the Fortune programs, and we continue to ask the City to support these diversion initiatives.

BRONX YOUTH AND GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence involving youth (persons who were seventeen years old or younger) has been on the rise. In 2024, 41% of the City's shooting incidents involved Bronx youth, which is a 7% increase from 2023. 30% of all gun arrests involving youths were in the Bronx. 42% of the victims in shooting incidents that occurred in the Bronx were youths, which is a 14% increase from 2023. These figures are higher than expected because only 20% of the City's youth population lives in the Bronx.

Despite the urgency to curb youth gun violence, we cannot and do not treat adolescents as fully formed adults. Generally speaking, the culpability of a young person is different. After all, the area of the brain that controls judgment and decision making—including weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses—takes longer to develop. “[R]esearch shows that full psycho-social maturity and adult-like decision making competence does not completely develop until the twenties.” Kevin Lapp, *Taking Back Juvenile Confessions*, UCLA Law Review, 902, 915 (May 2017). Because teenagers “lack the experience, perspective, and judgment” of adults, they are the “most susceptible to influence” and “outside pressures.” *J.D.B. v North Carolina*, 564 US 261, 275 (2011)(internal quotations omitted), *citing Roper v Simmons*, 543 US 551, 569 (2005);

Eddings v Oklahoma, 455 US 104, 115-16 (1982). In other words, in many situations, adolescents may not be responsible for their criminal conduct in the same way and to the same extent that adults are.

Additionally, the impact of incarceration is different on the young. There is growing evidence that incarceration is an ineffective means of steering youth away from violent or criminal behavior. Incarceration can be traumatizing and can expose youth to abusive and traumatic environments. Incarceration interrupts development and makes it less likely that an individual will be able to obtain the skills needed to become employed, to pursue educational goals, or to succeed in life. In many instances, incarceration is setting youth up to fail in the future, and that is no recipe for improving public safety. Studies show that, in general, adolescents respond more positively to rehabilitative measures than to punitive ones and, therefore, we believe that incarceration should be reserved only for the most violent, egregious conduct by our youth.

Notably, in 2024, there were 832 arrests involving youths in the Bronx. We declined to prosecute 146 of the cases and transferred 399 cases to Family Court. We prosecuted the remaining 287 cases. Those cases involved only serious, violent conduct, including shootings and gun offenses. Despite the seriousness of the conduct and the devastating, senseless injuries that so often result, we know that in many cases, incarceration is not the ONLY answer. Instead, we want to give these young offenders

the opportunity to receive a disposition that adequately takes into consideration their age, their circumstances, and their needs. In addition to holding them accountable, we want youth to have a pathway forward, away from a cycle of violence and toward education, training, and the acquisition of the life skills necessary for success. Accordingly, we examine every case involving a 13- to 17-year-old—with a focus on the individual and what is needed to succeed—to determine whether treatment or programming is a better resolution than incarceration.

A Youth Justice Bureau

In order to more effectively address youth violence and centralize all matters pertaining to youth justice, we intend to create a new Youth Justice Bureau. The bureau will be staffed with lawyers and other professionals who have been specifically trained on issues related to adolescent development, the problems and concerns unique to justice-involved youth, and the programming and alternative dispositions that are available to youth. Members of the Youth Justice Bureau have the necessary expertise to handle youth cases. They will consider the root causes of youth violence and the best practices to address the conditions and circumstances that contribute to youth violence. The bureau will be able to handle the youth cases more efficiently and obtain better, individualized youth-focused resolutions more quickly. The new team will cultivate relationships with the community and address community concerns regarding youth homicides and gun violence. They will enhance victim trust and help victims and their

families understand the process and potential outcomes. The bureau will foster a stronger collaboration with the court, court staff, and stakeholders, and ensure there is greater consistency in our practice, decision making, and treatment of youth offenders.

Additionally, in order to ensure that we can provide meaningful and holistic programming to Bronx Youth, we initiated a pilot project called the Justice Innovation for Bronx Youth (JIBY). Our partners in this work include: EAC Network (a mental health partner who will conduct clinical screenings, conduct referrals, and provide case management services); Dr. Keith Cruise (Fordham University) (who is developing an assessment tool and training staff on its use); Dr. Matthew Saleh (Cornell University) (who is providing overall fidelity monitoring and continuous quality improvement, as well as assisting with resource mapping); Montefiore Medical Center (who will provide mental health and substance use services); Lead by Example Reverse the Trend (LBERTT or Lead) (who will provide credible messenger services); and Reverend J. Loren Russell (who will provide spiritual guidance and life skills).

This initiative is funded in part by a grant from the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The grant is in the total amount of \$650,000 over three years. In order to receive these funds, our office must also supply \$267,823 over three years in matching funds (totaling \$917,823). The funding only covers a fraction of the true costs for the services needed for the project. The difference between the actual costs for the pilot alone and the funds allocated (\$650,000) is

upwards of \$1,249,146. This figure does not account for the costs associated with personnel that we hired to support the initiative. Moreover, because this is a pilot project, we sought funding only for Adolescent Offenders (16- and 17-year-old youth.) Accordingly, the initiative does not reach Juvenile Offenders (13–15-year-old youths.) Finally, the OJJDP grant can be used only for certain categories of offenses. This means that the resources of this initiative will not cover many of our youth. Additionally, it is important to appreciate that very little youth-oriented programming is in the Bronx. Moreover, existing programs tend to focus on isolated needs or conditions and do not address situations where the individual has multiple needs and challenges. For these reasons, we are asking the City to provide another \$600,000 to cover the costs of this robust pilot, which, if successful, will serve as a template for further expansion.

A COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

Last year, we asked for a Community Justice Center that would provide neighborhood-focused programs to address local public safety problems. During the last year, we looked for a partner who could help us actualize the kind of full-service Community Justice Center that we had envisioned for the Bronx. The Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) has agreed to partner with us to build the South Bronx Community Justice Center (Justice Center) at 630 Jackson Avenue.

The Justice Center will have community-based and court-based programs that can meaningfully address public safety and justice. The Justice Center will work to create

a safer, more equitable South Bronx through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. The Justice Center will amplify the impact of its current neighborhood-centric approach and allow it to grow in response to the needs of the South Bronx community. The expansion of the Justice Center will be developed in partnership with our office as well as other city and state stakeholders. Accordingly, we wholeheartedly support that the City provide \$2 million in funding to CJI to operate the Justice Center.

In that regard, we will collaborate with CJI to share data informing programs, refer eligible young people, and track outcomes. The Justice Center will serve 200 young people per year through an array of programming out of 630 Jackson Avenue (formally the HRA multi-service center) and will support the neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Melrose, and Morrisania.

Two million dollars are needed for CJI to operate the South Bronx Community Justice Center. Additionally, DCAS services will be needed to assess the physical conditions of the facilities at 630 Jackson Avenue with an eye to determining whether capital improvements are required. We wholeheartedly support this endeavor and ask that the City expedite the transfer of the building from HRA to DCAS and provide the necessary resources to CJI because we believe that the investment in our community will help create opportunities and pathways away from crime and violence.

VICTIM SERVICES

Crime Victims Assistance Bureau

We are very proud of the work that we do providing a robust suite of services to crime victims. In 2024, the Crime Victims Assistance Bureau (CVAB) provided targeted support to 7,552 new clients (28.21% increase) and delivered 56,842 follow-up services (27.90% increase) to new and existing clients. Our diverse team of general advocates, liaisons, specialized coordinators, and therapists assisted crime victims and witnesses with advocacy, crisis intervention, and comprehensive support throughout the complex and at times overwhelming criminal justice process.

In 2023, CVAB received City funding to hire two additional Early Victim Engagement (EVE) Liaisons to bolster supportive services and referrals available to survivors of intimate partner and gender-based violence. Also in 2023, the CVAB requested and received City funding to hire two additional Domestic Violence Advocates to provide survivors with concrete services and advocacy, especially after arraignment when relocation, financial support, and safety assessments are critically needed. Combined with the BXDA's Strangulation initiative, these gender-based, intimate partner violence programs, in 2024, served 4,928 new survivors, and provided 13,699 follow-up services to existing survivors. Combining early intervention, education, and holistic support fosters resilience, strengthens families, and creates a safer, more supportive community.

Homicide Advocate Program and Violence Response Team

With funding provided by the City, CVAB has established both a Homicide Advocate Program and a Violence Response Team to assist victims and their families, regardless of whether there is a prosecution. The Homicide Advocate Program provides comprehensive and long-term support to the families of homicide victims. Immediately after the program receives a referral, either directly from NYPD's Bronx Homicide Squad or from the assigned Homicide prosecutor, a dedicated advocate is assigned to connect with the victim's family and offer a range of services. These services include assistance with compensation for funeral expenses, which can be a significant financial burden during a difficult time, and support with the Office of Medical Examiner, if necessary.

In addition to practical assistance, the program provides advocacy services to help survivors navigate the complex legal system and connect them with other resources to support them in their grief. Once an arrest has been made, the program follows up with the Homicide Detective for updated information and keeps clients abreast of the court process and proceedings. The Homicide Advocates also connect survivors to the assigned assistant district attorney, who provides legal guidance and support throughout the trial process. In 2024, our Homicide Advocates provided support to 199 new cases and a total of 3,249 victim services for existing survivors.

Our Violence Response Program engages victims of non-fatal shootings, robberies, serious assaults and attempted murder and their families soon after the crime to provide comprehensive services as well as an immediate connection to our Office. Cooperation with the investigation and prosecution of the crime is not required to receive services or assistance from our team. The Violence Response Team consists of three Violence Response Advocates, a Senior Advocate, and a supervisor, who manages both the violence response and homicide programs. The team provides victims services seven days a week. In 2024, the Violence Response Team, serviced 311 new clients and 9,669 follow-up services to existing clients.

We receive referrals from sources inside our Office as well as from attorneys, hospitals, community-based organizations, and cure violence programs. The advocates establish contact with victims and their families at the earliest practical time after the crime—usually within 24 hours and even before there has been an arrest—to provide support and concrete services using a victim-centered trauma-informed approach and psychological first aid. The initial contact is primarily made by telephone; however, the advocate will meet the victim where it is most convenient for them, including at hospitals, precincts, and in some instances at homes or other private settings.

The services provided include but are not limited to, safety assessments, relocation assistance, on-site therapy referrals, Office of Victim Services compensation, criminal justice navigation support and court accompaniment. In addition to providing

emergency and extended supportive services, the Violence Response Team also conducts community/street outreach via community response rallies, vigils and marches providing an immediate connection to those seeking services. The violence response team has also facilitated preventive workshops in local schools. In 2024, the CVAB collaborated with The Boys Council and Girls Circle program. This program is vital to fostering personal growth and development in young men and women. These evidence-based initiatives provide safe, structured environments for adolescents to explore their identities, build self-esteem, and develop essential life skills. This past year, CVAB facilitated workshops for boys and girls aged 12 to 15 at the William J. Niles School. These workshops focused on teaching young adults the importance of healthy relationships and equipping them with the knowledge and tools to recognize and foster respectful and supportive interactions.

Both the Homicide Advocate Program and Violence Response Program are staffed with specialty advocates who receive additional and specialized training. Our Housing Specialist works very closely with both teams, and the work that they have done has been a great success. However, there are still certain gaps that need to be addressed.

Housing and Relocation

Bronx residents continue to be challenged by the lack of available housing and the difficulty in securing vouchers. The resource that is most requested by

victims/witnesses to violent crimes is relocation. Funding and resources are similarly needed to assist Domestic Violence (DV) victims in paying for suitable emergency housing or shelter placement. The ability to assist DV victims with relocation is critical to ensure victim safety and gain the trust and cooperation of victims so we can make good decisions and, when appropriate, pursue prosecutions. For at least two years, there has been a significant backlog in the approval of housing vouchers and a reduction in available housing and shelter space. When housing is available, victims often lack the resources to pay the upfront costs for moving. When a victim remains in housing that they either shared with an abuser or in housing that is known to an abuser, they are vulnerable to harassment by the abuser's family members, friends or by the abuser himself. This often causes a victim to be reluctant to participate in the prosecution for fear of reprisal and puts the victim's safety in jeopardy. In FY2024, we received funding from Council Members Dinowitz and Stevens for victim services. Of the \$35,000 granted, thus far, \$29,200 was used for victim relocation and victim/witness travel to and from court. Additional funding appropriated to our Office will allow us to continue to assist victims who are in similar dire situations.

Expanding CVAB's Therapy/Counseling Program

When a victim suffers a physical injury—for example, a broken arm—as a result of an assault or other criminal conduct, if the condition is untreated, eventually the bone may heal on its own. If, however, the person is treated by a highly skilled orthopedist,

then the healing time will improve dramatically, and the care provided will likely result in a better outcome than if there had been no treatment at all.

Similarly, the psychological and emotional injury suffered as a result of the same assault can last a lifetime and the victim is likely never to recover without skilled psychological treatment. True recovery from these kinds of wounds often requires specialized, expert psychological care. Moreover, the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by one victim can have a ripple effect, impacting family, friends, and the wider community. Unresolved trauma can even extend across generations. The good news is that healing is possible—for individuals, families, and communities—through access to appropriate, specialized psychological care.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of skilled orthopedists to mend broken bones. However, the same cannot be said for specialized mental health care. The Bronx, in particular, suffers from a critical shortage of qualified therapists, making it incredibly difficult for residents to access the psychological support they desperately need. This access gap is further widened by social and economic barriers.

The Bronx District Attorney's Crime Victims Assistance Bureau (CVAB) faces a critical shortage of licensed Clinical Social Workers who can provide therapeutic/counseling services. With only one clinical supervisor and four therapists currently employed, and two additional therapist positions vacant, the CVAB is struggling to meet the needs of over 100 crime victims on its therapy waitlist. The

situation is further compounded by the lack of any Spanish-speaking therapists on staff and lack of community mental health resources to refer out to.

The need for these services in our borough is amplified by the fact that we have an outsized share of the City's crime. Despite comprising only 17% of New York City's population, the Bronx experiences a disproportionately high rate of violent crime. The borough accounts for a staggering 32% of murders, 26% of rapes, 30% of robberies, 29% of felony assaults, 37% of shootings, and 38% of shooting victims. This translates to a per capita index crime rate of 2,065 in the Bronx—significantly higher than Staten Island (727), Brooklyn (1,124), Queens (1,219), and Manhattan (1,853). Ironically, the Bronx, with the greatest need for victim services, has the lowest per capita access to therapy resources of any borough.

To address the significant disparity in access to mental health services for crime victims in the Bronx, we propose a comprehensive strategy to alleviate the therapist shortage, remove barriers to care, and improve victim outcomes. This proposal requests \$1,150,000 for ten additional therapists and two supervisors, bringing the total to 16 therapists and three supervisors.

Acknowledging the national and city-wide shortage of qualified therapists, particularly those specializing in trauma-informed care for crime victims, our strategy is to attract highly specialized therapists who are drawn to our mission and who would appreciate the benefits we can offer, such as healthcare. Furthermore, unlike other

programs that impose arbitrary session limits, our therapy program will prioritize client needs, providing support for as long as necessary to facilitate healing. Given the extensive waitlists for community-based mental health services, this client-centered approach is essential to ensuring that crime victims in the Bronx receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

Bronx Rape Crisis Center

For decades, the Bronx District Attorney's Office was the only District Attorney's Office in New York State that had a Crime Victims Assistance Program operating as a Rape Crisis Center that was accredited by the NY State Department of Health (DOH). The Center had been accredited since the 1980s. It was one of only two accredited rape crisis centers in the Bronx and the only one that served the South Bronx, which is one of the poorest communities in the state and nation.

When DOH recently changed its rules and guidelines to exclude any District Attorney's Office from running a Rape Crisis Center, our Center lost its accreditation, leaving the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center as the sole remaining Rape Crisis Center located in Bronx County. Significantly, the Bronx has one of the highest incidents of reported rapes in NY State and has the least number of resources available to our sexual assault survivors.

Last year, we asked the City to support the establishment of additional Rape Crisis Centers in the Bronx to help provide free and confidential services for sexual

assault victims, survivors, and their close family and friends. Every other Borough in NYC has at least one Hospital-based Rape Crisis Center, Manhattan has six, but the Bronx has none. While a Hospital-based Rape Crisis Center does not operate at a profit, it is vital that at least one or more hospitals in the Bronx step up to meet this challenge. A newly created Bronx Sexual Assault Task Force has stepped up to meet the challenge. The task force, which is comprised of community-based Bronx organizations and hospital representatives, is working to create a rape crisis center in the Bronx. Although the center is still in the planning stages, we are confident that the vision of bringing much needed services to sexual assault survivors in the Bronx will be realized.

STAFFING

As previously noted, over the last few years, there has been a marked increase in index crimes, which means that more of the court's resources—and our resources—are taxed. Additionally, the impact of discovery reform stretches our resources further.

Under the old discovery statute, only a small portion of discovery was done early in the life of a case. Indeed, the bulk of discovery was done only if the case reached a suppression hearing or trial. Because most cases were resolved by guilty plea—before trial—relatively fewer resources were used on discovery. Under the new statute, a much broader range of material is discoverable and the material must be disclosed to the defense very early in the life of the case. In other words, there is a great deal more

discovery work that must be done on every case. That is true even for cases that are resolved by a guilty plea or those that result in dismissal.

Moreover, the changes in the discovery laws have—as intended—given rise to extensive pre-trial discovery litigation, motion practice, discovery conferences, and discovery compliance hearings. These proceedings are necessary to ensure that all the required discovery material has been disclosed in a timely fashion and that the People are ready for trial within the mandated statutory time periods. The court devotes more resources than ever to resolve discovery and trial readiness disputes. As a result, there are court delays. In 2019, for example, violent felony cases resulted in a conviction by plea or trial within 364 days. In 2024, the average time between commencement of a violent felony case and conviction jumped to 456 days or roughly three additional months.

The increase in the number of court proceedings coupled with the increase in court delays and increase in the amount of discovery work overall means that there is a significant increase in the workloads for our staff. While we largely support the objectives of new discovery framework and believe that the additional early disclosures and transparency make us better at the work we do and benefit our community, we continue to need additional resources to meet discovery demands. Additional staff is paramount to help us decrease workloads, improve efficiency, and reduce court delays.

Just a few years ago, we were experiencing an alarming rate of attrition. Thankfully, due to an increase in funding and enhanced recruitment efforts, we have stemmed the tide of mass attrition. At this time last year, we had 1041 active employees. Currently, we have 1159 active employees, which represents an 11% increase. This month, we welcomed a class of 20 new assistant district attorneys (ADAs) and, in August, another class of 90 new ADAs will join our ranks.

Of course, the bulk of our new hires are very junior and, because we experienced years of mass attrition, much of our staff is inexperienced. As a result, we are looking to hire lateral attorneys—generally with eight to ten years of experience—who are more accomplished and have a greater level of subject matter and specialized expertise.

Homicide

Notably, for example, we need to hire attorneys who can tackle difficult homicide cases. There has been a 46% increase in homicides in the Bronx from 2019 to 2024. This is more than twice the increase in homicides city wide. Moreover, a significant number of our homicide cases involve juvenile or adolescent offenders. Staffing levels for our Homicide Bureau have not kept pace with the increase in workloads.

Youth Justice Bureau

Additionally, we are looking to hire individuals for our newly formed Youth Justice Bureau who have special training and expertise to handle the unique challenges

of youth crime. In addition to ADAs, we want the bureau to have a clinical resource coordinator who can communicate with healthcare and service providers and acquire the necessary documentation and clinical insights for case evaluation. We also need a specialized trial preparation assistant to help with discovery and case preparation.

Problem Solving Court

Last year, we proposed the creation of a new, all-purpose dedicated problem-solving court to offer creative solutions, treatment and programming in mental health cases, substance abuse cases (akin to a drug court), cases involving veterans, and cases where restorative justice is appropriate. It is our understanding that there will be a new problem-solving court in Bronx County Criminal Term in 2025. To staff the court, we will need the resources for additional personnel, including: an assistant district attorney, a specialized trial preparation assistant, and a resource coordinator.

Pre-Arraignment DAT Diversion Program

Additionally, we are asking for resources for the pilot pre-arraignment DAT diversion program that will operate in the 44th Precinct, thanks to a federal grant. And the support of the NYPD. Individuals who receive a desk appearance ticket (DAT) for victimless, non-violent misdemeanor offenses will have an opportunity to receive aid or services in lieu of prosecution. During a meeting with a peer navigator at the precinct, the individual will immediately be offered a tangible item or service from a wide-ranging menu. The menu could include naloxone and fentanyl testing kits, a meal and a list of

food pantries in the area where the arrestee resides, hygiene materials, clean clothing or outerwear, a shower, a gift card to a pharmacy or market, a ride to a shelter, light medical care, a treatment referral, transportation to detox, a MetroCard, a prepaid phone, assistance with obtaining a NYS identification, or a therapeutic conversation with a referral to a mental health clinic. The aim is to address an immediate and pressing need which can provide some measure of stability rather than to pursue a prosecution. Individuals who choose to participate will not be charged and will not need to appear in court for an arraignment. Individuals who choose not to participate, will be charged. Once they go to court, they will again be offered a chance to engage with a service provider, and if cooperative, the case will be dismissed.

While resources are needed to compensate the service and treatment providers, we need additional staff on our end to manage the practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of the services. In particular, we are seeking funds for two ADAs, two trial preparation assistants, and a data analyst for our pilot pre-arraignment DAT diversion program.

Sexual Assault and Child Abuse

We also need attorneys who are trained to handle sexual assault and child abuse cases. These individuals must be fluent in principles and techniques of trauma informed care and the forensic interviewing of children. Notably, too, best practices dictate that special victims cases should be handled vertically so that, whenever possible, one person maintains trust and continuity of care with the victim throughout the life of the case.

During this last year, we lost several attorneys who had the necessary specialized skills to handle these cases. We are looking to replace them with individuals who have the commensurate level of skills and experience.

Auto Crimes

Furthermore, we need to hire additional lawyers to address auto crimes. These offenses include grand larceny auto, auto stripping, thefts of catalytic converters, wheel rims or airbags, fraudulent Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINS) and titles, and auto insurance related crimes. Auto crime has dramatically increased in the Bronx over the last several years. Grand larceny auto (GLA) rose 10.5% in the last 2 years and 104.1% over the last 14 years.² According to NYPD statistics, in 2019, citywide, there were 5,428 GLA thefts. That number nearly doubled in 2020, to 9,037. By 2023, there were 15,795 GLA thefts city wide.

Car theft rings in the Bronx have become more prevalent. The organized rings steal high end cars in the tri-state area, clone key fobs, forge VINs and titles, and sell the cars over social media outlets such as Facebook Marketplace or Telegram to unsuspecting buyers. The buyers discover that they have bought a stolen car when they try to register it at the DMV. Other stolen cars are put in truck containers for export overseas. Persons driving stolen cars often engage in dangerous and reckless driving,

² NYPD Compstat Report Covering the Week 11/4/2004 Through 11/10/2024. The 2 year percentage increase is offset somewhat by a decline year to date.

endangering police officers, other drivers and pedestrians. Stolen cars, mopeds and e-bikes are commonly used in the commission of violent crimes such as robberies or shootings. Carjacking is also a recurring problem. The economic impact of these crimes is significant, due in part to the rise in prices for cars and replacement parts.

Statistics show not only that a disproportionate number of grand larcenies auto occur in the Bronx (a 235% increase from 2019 to 2024, twice the city wide increase), but the Bronx is also a hub for much of the auto crime that occurs in the tri state area. Numerous cars are stolen out of state and brought to the Bronx, where they are either altered and resold or put in shipping containers to be sent overseas. While we currently have several major investigations underway, we are also seeking experienced staff to conduct the kind of long-term, wider reaching investigations that are needed to address organized car theft.

Retail Theft

Additional, thefts from retail stores—which can include robberies, assaults, and the use of weapons and the threat of violence—continue to have a significant impact on the financial health of businesses, on the morale of their workforces, and on the quality of life for the residents in our communities. The rate of retail theft is still high in the Bronx and additional stores have closed as a result of unsustainable losses. We are looking to hire a number of trial preparation assistants who can assist in obtaining

and compiling discovery materials, so that the lawyers who are assigned to these cases can concentrate on moving these cases forward expeditiously.

Leadership Training

We are also asking for funding to supplement and enhance our training and programming around leadership and management. We have built a cadre of training modules to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for all facets of lawyering, legal scholarship, and criminal litigation. But to maximize the retention of our employees, and to ensure that managers are motivating staff and creating a positive work environment, we need to do more to train all of our staff—not just managers—on critical leadership principles and techniques. These trainings foster good communication, help build staff relationships and reduce unnecessary conflicts. The trainings increase productivity and efficiency. Staff members have a better understanding of their managers' expectations. Managers are better equipped to help their staff do their best work. The trainings help our staff cope with stress, improve employee wellness and the sense of work-life balance. We also find that these trainings have made our staff better and more empathetic decision makers.

NARCOTICS

Narcotics Trafficking

Fentanyl, a powerful, lab-made (synthetic) opioid that is 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin, continues to impact residents of the Bronx. A very small amount can be lethal and even unknowing contact with fentanyl can have tragic results. Additionally, this year, we have seen an increase in Xylazine, which is a horse tranquilizer used by veterinarians, mixed in with fentanyl designed to prolong fentanyl's effects.

Our Special Investigations Bureau has conducted numerous intensive investigations into all levels of the fentanyl trade, from its import into the country through the U.S. Mail and other methods to its sale to an individual user. Through working closely with members of the NYPD, DEA, and other agencies, we have seized kilograms of fentanyl being brought into the Bronx from out of state, for example kilograms of fentanyl being mailed from California as well as additional kilograms transported from Pennsylvania. SIB and law enforcement partners have also investigated individuals coordinating together to obtain and sell fentanyl – resulting in the seizure of thousands of glassines containing fentanyl that were packaged for sale, including, in one case, the possession of A-I weight worth an estimated street value of \$110,000, as well as several firearms.

Undercover buy operations that target Open-Air Drug Markets as well as violence prone locations, conducted with the Narcotics Bureau—Bronx have also resulted in the arrests of sellers and the seizure of additional glassines. Moreover, in conjunction with NYPD and BXDA Child Abuse Services, SIB has also investigated the non-fatal overdose of an 18 months old child. Further investigation revealed the possession of fentanyl inside the location of overdose and that the father was packaging and selling fentanyl, thereby resulting in the arrests and ongoing prosecution of the child's parents.

Substance Use Disorder

Members of SIB have been conducting investigations into the Open-Air Drug Markets that are negatively affecting Bronx communities. One market operates within The Hub area, where 149th Street, Willis Avenue, Third Avenue, and Melrose Avenue converge. The area has been a vibrant commercial center. Now it is also an open-air drug dealing den where desperate individuals overdose on the street. The condition has created many deeply troubling public health and quality-of-life issues, including substance abuse, mental health, homeless outreach, sanitation issues. What is needed from the City is a collaborative, multi-agency effort. Members of our team, including staff from SIB, the Community Engagement Bureau, Trial Bureaus, Crime Strategies Bureau, and Community Justice Bureau have been working with local community organizations and with NYPD and SDNY to address activities in and around the Hub.

CONCLUSION

We hope you will see the need for providing vital resources to help improve the lives of Bronxites, which will lead to a decrease in violent crime and the betterment of the community.

Bronx County District Attorney (902)

Finance Department

FY26 Executive Plan New Needs Request

EXPENSE (000s)										
New Needs	FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28		FY29	
	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC
Additional Staffing (various divisions/bureaus)	\$ -	-	\$ 27,210	187	\$ 24,943	187	\$ 24,943	187	\$ 24,943	187
Justice Innovation for Bronx Youth (JIBY) - CTL Match	\$ -	-	\$ 146	-	\$ 220	-	\$ 233	-	\$ -	-
Wellness/Training Consultant	\$ -	-	\$ 1,475	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-
GRAND TOTAL	\$ -	-	\$ 28,831	187	\$ 25,163	187	\$ 25,176	187	\$ 24,943	187

BRONX BORO/MOCJ EXPENSE (000s)										
New Needs	FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28		FY29	
	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC	\$	HC
South Bronx Community Justice Center	\$ -	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-
GRAND TOTAL	\$ -	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-	\$ 2,000	-



**Testimony of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz
New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
Preliminary Budget and Oversight Hearing FY 2026
March 11, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam and members of the Committee on Public Safety. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding my office's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget.

2024 was another busy and challenging year. A year in which my office processed over 52,000 arrests and conducted over 43,000 arraignments. We took a record number of guns and drugs off our streets, held violent criminals and recidivists accountable, empowered domestic violence and sex trafficking victims, and returned homes to their rightful owners.

At the same time, we employed a community-based approach to prosecution that has fostered an environment where residents feel empowered to connect with law enforcement. We evaluate our cases closely and expeditiously to reach just resolutions and review past convictions to ensure justice is served.

Over the last year, my office worked tirelessly to address robberies, felony assaults, rapes, and retail theft, crimes which were all, unfortunately, on the rise in 2024. In addition, there were 64 homicides in Queens last year, up 16% compared to 2023, which was the second lowest year since 2016. The length of time from arraignment to disposition also increased slightly in 2024, due to the increased volume of arrests coupled with the continuing responsibilities for discovery compliance and protracted motion practice.

We continue to do all that we can to address evolving crime issues -- including placing a strong focus on removing illegal guns from our streets and curbing the pervasive gun violence that plagues our communities. Through hard work and collaboration with the police and community leaders, 2024 closed with a significant decline in shootings both across the city and in Queens. According to 2024 NYPD Compstat statistics, while shootings declined 8% citywide, they decreased 10% in Queens. And while the number of shooting victims decreased by 5% citywide, in Queens that decrease was 11%. In addition, last year Queens had the highest number

and percentage of trial convictions on gun cases since the Office of Court Administration's Gun Violence Fast Track Initiative began.

Our Crime Strategies and Intelligence Bureau has supplemented these efforts by pursuing untraceable, unregulated personally made firearms that have become an ever-expanding threat to public safety, including 3D printed guns. Since the Bureau's inception in 2021, Queens has accounted for 38% of all ghost guns recovered citywide, with our investigations leading to the recovery of 294 ghost guns and a multitude of firearm components and accessories.

At the same time, our Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau has focused on identifying and prosecuting drivers of violence engaged in organized crime, including members of street gangs and firearms dealers. Just as we are taking deadly firearms off the street, we are simultaneously dismantling street gangs that wreak havoc in our communities. Over the last several months, my office has conducted significant takedowns of violent gang members including those associated with the "8 Trey Movin Crips" and Tren de Aragua gang organizations. We are committed to working with our law enforcement and community partners to end this epidemic of gun and gang violence throughout Queens County.

Over the last year, we also continued to combat the proliferation of illegal cannabis shops, many of which are dangerously close to schools, daycare centers and places of worship. Since November 2022, joint enforcement operations have resulted in the prosecution of 440 individuals for felony-level charges related to the sale or possession of cannabis or controlled substances, and the initiation of dozens of eviction proceedings to permanently remove the illegal proprietors from these retail locations. In addition, these investigations have resulted in the seizure of over 6,500 lbs. of cannabis edibles, over 11,000 lbs. of cannabis flower, over 17,500 cannabis vape "pens," hundreds of packages of edible psilocybin, also known as "magic mushrooms," all of which has an estimated total value of more than \$25 million.

In 2024, we also announced a partnership between my office's Detective Bureau and the NYPD to remove illegal motorized scooters from our streets in response to the all too frequent role scooters play in the commission of crimes, including drive-by shootings, robberies, and vehicular violence. The often careless and dangerous operation of motorized scooters on our roads, and even our sidewalks, has become an increasing community concern. Since the beginning of this initiative, we have removed over 1,000 scooters that were illegally parked on sidewalks and streets. Nearly all of which were unregistered.

We have also implemented a comprehensive approach to combatting retail theft. My office has developed partnerships and relationships with large and small retailers and civic associations throughout the borough to identify retail theft recidivists, those who engage in violent acts while committing theft, and investigating and prosecuting organized retail theft and resale rings responsible for the loss of tens of thousands of dollars to our businesses. In November, we were the first office in New York State to charge a defendant with the crime of fostering the sale of stolen goods. This measure, passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Hochul last year, allows prosecutors to stop the sale of stolen goods through both online platforms and brick-and-mortar locations.

Another persistent crime that continues to negatively impact Queens County is deed fraud. My Housing and Worker Protection Bureau has focused on eliminating this scourge from Queens County and, in 2024, we returned 15 homes to their rightful owners as a result of our investigations. These matters included the prosecution of a man who stole his niece's inheritance, a disbarred attorney who stole multiple homes from elderly victims and a perpetrator who stole several houses for resale. The bureau has also assisted landlords with evicting tenants who conduct illegal businesses. This has resulted in the eviction of 10 illegal cannabis businesses and 15 illegal brothel operations.

We are proactive in protecting those affected by human trafficking. Our Human Trafficking Bureau has implemented a victim-centered and trauma informed approach while connecting survivors of trafficking with meaningful services to empower them to escape their exploitation. The bureau conducts extensive community outreach and education and distributes information aimed toward preventing and identifying trafficking in our communities. In 2024, the Human Trafficking Bureau obtained 22 criminal convictions; 12 of which were felonies, most involving the kidnapping, sex trafficking and rape of women and children.

Within the area of domestic violence, we are expanding the office's efforts to effectively address this issue and to eliminate the stigma attached to being a domestic violence survivor. To achieve these goals, we build partnerships, increase community outreach, provide support for survivors, and use diversionary programs and education to change abusive behavior. But our paramount goal is to keep families safe by holding violent offenders and recidivists accountable.

Now, I would like to discuss some of our ongoing initiatives aimed at ensuring fairness and equity within the criminal justice system.

Our Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) continues to reinvestigate and resolve credible claims of actual innocence and wrongful conviction, when the circumstances of a case undermine confidence in a just outcome. Since its inception in 2020, 268 individual cases have been submitted to the CIU for review. To date, the CIU has vacated 17 convictions based on evidence of innocence or other fundamental errors and 122 felony and misdemeanor convictions have been reversed on our own initiative because they involved NYPD officers who were later convicted of crimes including perjury, falsifying evidence and other serious offenses committed while they were on the job.

We also remain keenly focused on Rehabilitation Programs and Restorative Services to help break cycles of crime and allow offenders, when appropriate, to participate in treatment and community-based programs. We have worked with our non-profit agency partners to refer 1,600 defendants to community service and more than half successfully completed their service mandates. We continued our participation in Project Reset -- a pre-arraignment diversion program for misdemeanor arrests -- and since its inception, 750 people successfully completed the program. At the same time, we have reviewed 622 cases for eligibility and successfully enrolled 40 participants in the Gun Diversion program we launched to ensure that appropriate offenders are afforded interventions and rehabilitative service. To date, 23 participants successfully graduated from the program. In addition, in the last year alone, our Crime Victims Advocate Program offered services to nearly 4,000 individuals.

We also keep our attention on at-risk youth and alternatives to drugs and guns through our Community Partnerships Division. Staff in this division participated in over 600 public events last year, increasing awareness of the office as a community resource. We work with community-based organizations to reinvest in our most vulnerable communities and have held ten gun buyback events -- taking over 540 guns off Queens streets.

Our Immigration Unit acts as an office-wide resource on immigration matters and includes a non-prosecutor immigration lawyer to review motions on past convictions and advise on avoiding unintended consequences. Our Immigration Unit also provides specific case evaluations and plea alternatives; advises Assistant District Attorneys on immigration related post-conviction motions; and certifies U- and T-visa requests for current and former cooperating victims where appropriate. Through November 2024, 327 U-Visa certifications and 4 T-Visa Certifications were issued.

Now, I would like to turn to our discovery obligations and our current budget and fiscal condition.

Meeting our discovery obligations continues to pose significant and ongoing challenges. In 2024, Queens ADAs reviewed over 1.7 million discovery files and 155,000 body worn camera videos. While early disclosure of evidence is an essential part of a fair system, we now have the experience and insight of the past five years to examine the efficacy of the new discovery laws. While the intent of the discovery reform of 2020 was to reduce delays and facilitate “swift, efficient and just” dispositions, the practical effect of those reforms is that cases are taking longer to reach disposition and dismissals have increased. It is the unfortunate reality that cases are routinely dismissed for wholly inadvertent and inconsequential error.

As for our current budget condition, funding provided by both the City and State continues to make a significant impact on my office by providing the resources we need to meet our discovery obligations, increase staffing and pay competitive salaries.

Since March 2020, we have been able to increase our ADA headcount from 312 to 408. Our 2024 Fall class included 52 ADAs and we are actively recruiting more ADAs for our upcoming classes and hiring experienced attorneys who can provide much-needed expertise in a variety of specialized areas. Increasing our ADA staffing will help reduce caseloads, which will in turn help us better meet our discovery timelines and obligations. It should be noted that despite the increase in our ADA headcount, our ADAs are handling approximately 170 cases throughout the year, so a continued focus on hiring is still needed, particularly in light of the significant increase in arrests that Queens experienced last year.

A crucial component of recruiting and hiring additional ADA staff is being able to offer a competitive salary that is reflective of the scope and importance of their work. We have used the funding to create a salary step program for our ADA staff which helps address recruitment and retention issues that my office has faced over the last several years. Our ADAs work tirelessly to ensure that justice is being served each day and they deserve compensation that recognizes and reflects the value of their efforts.

We also continue to hire additional paralegals, IT staff and other support staff professionals who work hand-in-hand with our ADAs to provide the support they need to ensure that the office runs smoothly and efficiently.

We also continue to make critical IT investments including major upgrades to our IT infrastructure and software. We now have many large-scale IT projects underway, with others planned for the next several years, all of which are carefully designed and executed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of how we do our jobs.

However, changes at the federal level over the last month have brought much uncertainty to the state of our federal funding streams, including those that pass-through New York State and New York City. We currently have approximately \$2 million in annual federal funding that supports critical programs related to domestic violence, cold cases/DNA, victim assistance, and career criminal/gang violence matters, as well other initiatives that support our day-to-day operations. The potential loss of federal funding will significantly impact the work we do and the progress we have made in these areas.

In addition, on a larger scale, if overall federal funding is reduced to New York City and New York State, the impact of those reductions will be significantly greater. We have come to rely on the enhanced discovery and Aid to Prosecution funding that the State provided over the last two years to make investments that require maintenance and upgrades to meet security standards. Loss or reduction of these funding streams would have a serious impact on our day-to-day operations including hindering our ability to efficiently meet our ongoing discovery obligations. As I mentioned, we are in the midst of implementing critical IT initiatives, and without continued funding, some of these projects will need to be halted and others may never even get off the ground. We have all worked so hard over the last several years to initiate change in our offices and to be in a position of growth and modernization. To lose that momentum now would be a disservice to our residents, who will truly feel its impact.

It is therefore critical that we are able to rely on sustained funding at the City and State level that supports the needs of the office and the people of Queens County. Any funding reduction or elimination will only set us back and will impede future progress.

In addition, I am requesting \$2.4 million in funding to begin building a computer forensic laboratory in Queens, with the equipment, software and staffing needed to address the growing demand for digital evidence extraction and analysis. The proposed lab will be equipped with the technology necessary to extract, analyze, and store digital evidence across multiple devices and platforms. We currently have only limited in-house capacity to conduct detailed and specialized forensic examinations and often rely on our fellow law enforcement partners to conduct these examinations. The implementation of the lab will enable us to enhance our investigative capabilities, improve workflow efficiency, and ensure the timely delivery of evidence. We are therefore requesting your support in addressing this need and modernizing our forensic capabilities. With faster and more reliable evidence extraction, we will be better positioned to meet legal deadlines, improve case outcomes, and ultimately serve justice more efficiently and effectively. Please see the attached new needs funding request for details on our proposal.

Lastly, I would like to mention that my office continues to face a severe shortage in available office space. This ongoing problem hinders hiring and has prevented my office from moving forward on projects and initiatives simply because we do not have the space to put people. This need is especially critical in Queens where we require our staff to be present in the office every workday to ensure that they are sharing information; and are focused on their work; and that they are receiving the training and mentoring they need to become the best advocates possible.

While my staff actively seeks out rental space in the vicinity of the courthouse to help alleviate overcrowding in the short-term, what we really need is a comprehensive, long-term solution that can house all of my staff in one consolidated space. I ask for your support in moving forward on this important issue.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and appreciate your support. I look forward to working with you and your staffs on important criminal justice initiatives in the year ahead.

Office of the Queens County District Attorney

FY 26 New Needs Funding Request

Computer Forensic Laboratory

Requested Funding: \$2,379,000

The Office of the Queens County District Attorney (QDA) is seeking funding to support the creation of a Computer Forensic Lab to address the growing demand for digital evidence extraction during the course of investigations. The proposed lab will be equipped with the technology necessary to extract, analyze, and store digital evidence across multiple devices and platforms, with an emphasis on security, precision, and confidentiality. Having this capability will enable QDA to enhance our investigative capabilities, improve workflow efficiency, and ensure the timely delivery of evidence. The lab will provide expert forensic analysis to support legal proceedings with reliable, court-admissible evidence, backed by qualified personnel who can testify in court.

QDA currently faces significant challenges with digital evidence extraction due to limited in-house capabilities and reliance on the police department's forensic lab. Unfortunately, the police department's lab often experiences backlogs, leaving us unable to obtain vital evidence in a timely manner, which in turn hampers the efficiency of our investigations. Our current staffing and resources are insufficient to handle the increasing number of cybercrimes, vehicle data extractions, and advanced smartphone extractions that are now critical to successful prosecutions. Over the last several years, we have faced a significant reduction in our ability to conduct cell phone data extractions – decreasing from 203 extractions in 2018 to just 82 in 2024. This decline is due to software limitations, limited personnel and overall increasing workload and responsibilities of assigned staff.

The creation of a lab will ensure the secure extraction and analysis of digital evidence from a wide variety of devices, including computers, smartphones, vehicles, and cryptocurrency wallets, thereby reducing, and ultimately eliminating, dependency on the police department's forensic lab. The lab will improve the efficiency of cybercrime investigations, including fraud, dark web, cryptocurrency cases, and facilitate other digital evidence extraction needs, such as vehicle infotainment systems and chip-off procedures. The lab staff will also have the flexibility to conduct data extractions during the execution of search warrants in the field. This is particularly critical in cybercrime cases, including dark web and cryptocurrency-related

investigations involving child sexual abuse, where time-sensitive evidence must be preserved immediately.

We are therefore requesting **\$1,790,000 in PS funding** to hire personnel with expertise in computer forensics, digital evidence analysis, and cybersecurity to effectively design and implement the lab including:

Computer Forensic Laboratory Director **\$175,000**

The Director will be responsible for overseeing the operation of the lab, coordinating evidence extraction, and managing the forensic analysis process.

Computer Forensic Laboratory Deputy Director **\$160,000**

The Deputy Director will work with the Director in overseeing and managing the day-to-day operations of the lab, including coordinating evidence extraction, and managing the forensic analysis process.

Forensic Technicians **\$400,000**

The technicians will be responsible for performing extractions from various devices, including smartphones, computers, and vehicles. They will also assist with chip-off procedures and 3D printing of ghost gun components. (5 technicians at an average annual salary of \$80,000 = \$400,000)

Cybercrime Specialists **\$400,000**

The specialists will be experts in cryptocurrency and dark web investigations, responsible for handling digital evidence related to cybercrimes, including blockchain forensics and cryptocurrency wallet extractions. (4 specialists at an average annual salary of \$100,000 = \$400,000)

Evidence Custodian **\$75,000**

The custodian will be responsible for managing and securing physical and digital evidence, ensuring that all items are properly logged, stored, and tracked.

Assistant District Attorneys **\$375,000**

The attorneys will oversee all legal aspects of assigned cyber-crime cases, including handling of all referrals; conducting interviews and debriefings; preparing search warrants, subpoenas, and other legal documents; and developing pro-active investigations and sting operations. (3 ADAs at an average annual salary of \$125,000 = \$375,000)

Detective Investigators

\$150,000

The detective investigators will gather information for investigations and analyze crime patterns and intelligence data. During the course of investigations, a full range of investigative techniques will be utilized, as deemed necessary, including physical surveillance, the use of informants and undercover operatives, sting operations, and sophisticated surveillance and investigative techniques, such as search warrants, wiretapping or other electronic eavesdropping and surveillance. The investigators will assist with field investigations, surveillance, interviews, debriefings, and intelligence gathering. They will also serve as liaisons with other local, state and federal law enforcement on these matters. (2 detective investigators at an average annual salary of \$75,000 = \$150,000)

Trial Preparation Assistant

\$55,000

The trial preparation assistant will maintain contact with witnesses, obtain and organize documentation needed for investigations and trials, and assist with subpoenas, court orders, motion responses, and the preparation and analysis of detailed paperwork and spreadsheets.

In addition, we are also requesting **\$589,000 in OTPS funding** to purchase the hardware and software needed to ensure the efficient operation of the lab including:

Investigative Software

\$250,000

Investigative software will enable the assigned staff to capture, analyze and report on digital evidence collected. The software will provide staff with the ability to conduct

thorough investigations by collecting intelligence from a variety of sources and will also have the ability to recover digital evidence from deleted and hidden files. In addition, the software will assist with conducting in-depth forensic analysis and providing the ability to create images, analyze registries, conduct investigations, decrypt files, crack passwords, and build reports.

Faraday Tent for Mobile Device Extraction

\$30,000

The Faraday Tent will be utilized to block RF signals during smartphone extractions to ensure that data can be retrieved securely from mobile devices without interference or the possibility of remote wiping or altering of data.

Chip-Off Equipment

\$10,000

The chip-off equipment will be utilized to extract data directly from the memory chips of damaged devices. This is crucial for cases involving severely damaged or locked devices, ensuring all potential evidence is recovered.

Forensic Workstations

\$180,000

The forensic workstations will be used by assigned staff to conduct their day-to-day duties in support of investigations and prosecutions. The workstations will have the capability to extract critical data from vehicle infotainment systems, including call logs, text messages, contacts, driving history, vehicle operational history, and media files, which have become increasingly relevant in investigations involving motor vehicles. Eighteen workstations are being requested at an average cost of \$10,000/each.

Laptop Computers

\$66,000

The laptop computers will be utilized by assigned forensic specialists/technicians and detective investigators while conducting field operations. Eleven laptops are being requested at an average cost of \$6,000/each.

Printers**\$20,000**

Printers will be utilized by assigned staff in conjunction with the requested workstations. Two printers are estimated at \$10,000/each.

3D Printer**\$3,000**

The 3D printer will be utilized to support investigations related to ghost guns. This printer will allow for the replication of firearm components from digital schematics, which may be relevant in the context of self-manufactured firearms in cybercrime investigations.

Digital Evidence Storage**\$30,000**

Digital evidence storage will be utilized to securely store the extracted digital evidence, ensuring that data remains confidential and protected. Two units are estimated at \$15,000/each.

The creation of a dedicated Computer Forensic Lab will reduce our current backlog, enhance investigative capabilities, and reduce dependency on external labs. The lab will provide the resources necessary to meet the growing demand for cybercrime investigations, such as cryptocurrency, fraud, and dark web cases, and will significantly increase QDA's capacity to handle a higher volume of data extractions. With faster and more reliable evidence extraction, QDA will be better positioned to meet legal deadlines, improve case outcomes, and ultimately serve justice more efficiently and effectively.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 372 | NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 | AFSCME
TO THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING ON PUBLIC SAFETY
MARCH 11, 2025
4:00 PM

Chairman Yusef Salaam and distinguished members of the committee, I am Glenys Rivera, 2nd Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 - AFSCME. It is the honor of Local 372 to present this testimony on behalf of the Level-I and Level-II School Crossing Guards that we represent under the leadership of our President, Shaun D. Francois I. Local 372 respectfully requests: the City to restore the School Crossing Guard vacancy positions that were cut from the previous budget, City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards, and permanent reforms to School Crossing Guard pay practices, conforming same to that of other DOE support staff titles.

Local 372 has long testified that the need to hire additional School Crossing Guards is vital in order to keep our children safe from the dangers of reckless drivers, and to ensure that our School Crossing Guard members are not stretched thin by the continuous decline of staff. Student-pedestrians often face major safety traffic hazards everyday caused by double-and-triple parked cars at bus stops sited in close proximities to school buildings, and School Crossing Guards are often the first line of defense in ensuring the safety of these students. These workers have risked their own health, safety and lives to perform these vital services to the community, and as the number of School Crossing Guards continue to decline, thousands of school children cross main intersections without any supervision, putting our children's safety in jeopardy. The need for increased protections for our student pedestrians and members of our communities make it

essential that the City of New York allocate funding for the additional hiring of School Crossing Guards. In 2023, Mayor Eric Adams authorized the elimination of almost 500 open school crossing guard positions, completely eliminating the hiring of additional School Crossing Guards, and just last year in March, an 8-year-old boy lost his life due to a driver's recklessness, just five blocks from school.¹ By eliminating these open positions and not hiring additional School Crossing Guards, sends a dangerous message: the safety of NYC school children is not the City's priority. **Local 372 respectfully requests** that the City restore the 500 open positions, and hire additional School Crossing Guards providing our school children with heightened protections as they travel to and from school.

Throughout the last couple of years, there has been a lot of coverage on the violence that transit workers were experiencing while on the job. In response, Governor Hochul and the Legislature, working with the City Council, enacted numerous legislation that implemented protections addressing the violence towards transit workers and riders. Just last week, in marking one year since the implementation of the Executive's five-point subway safety plan, the Governor highlighted reductions in New York City transit crimes and her Administration's ongoing efforts to expand safety initiatives throughout the transit system.² What we have not heard addressed is the similar risk of violence that School Crossing Guards face on a daily basis. That is why **Local 372 respectfully requests** City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards.

¹ *Gothamist*: "Queens parents struggle to get crossing guards after 2 students killed in traffic," Sept. 27, 2024, <https://gothamist.com/news/queens-parents-struggle-to-get-crossing-guards-after-2-students-killed-in-traffic>

² Press Office: Safe Subways: One Year After Deploying Additional Law Enforcement and Safety Measures..., March 6, 2025, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/safer-subways-one-year-after-deploying-additional-law-enforcement-and-safety-measures-governor>

Notwithstanding, while increasing the number of School Crossing Guard positions solves the staffing and safety issue, it does not solve the equity problem that our members are currently facing. School Crossing Guards work a 25-hour capped part-time schedule that includes early morning, lunch time and after school hours, serving almost a million public-school children. Our members do not get paid for snow days and certain holidays (days where the schools shut down but the City remains open), leaving their paychecks dependent on the whims of the weather. A snow day might just be the determining factor as to whether a School Crossing Guard can put food on the table. For many New Yorkers who are living paycheck to paycheck, like School Crossing Guards, any one unanticipated day off from work can be the difference between making ends meet and financial ruin.

Despite working under the New York Police Department (“NYPD”), School Crossing Guards are functionally analogous to school support staff titles working under the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”). Likewise, School Crossing Guards and DOE school support staff should also share the same privileges and pay rights. Just as DOE school support staff are currently compensated for this lost time, so too should School Crossing Guards be equally compensated. On top of the equity concern, it also poses a retainage issue. Due to the acknowledged dangers that come with the position, in addition to not having pay benefits that are on par with other DOE support staff titles, the current pay practices for School Crossing Guards are harmful to these vital workers. Within the School Crossing Guard membership, 90% are women, 85% are Black and Latino, and many of our members are at higher risk because they are older, with 33% of the membership aged over 55 years old. **Local 372 requests** permanent reforms to conform School Crossing Guard pay practices to that of other DOE support staff titles.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and for your continued support on behalf of Local 372’s School Crossing Guards.

THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY HEARING ON THE
PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

PRESENTED BY:
JANE FOX

ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADVOCATES AND ATTORNEYS, UAW LOCAL 2325

MARCH 11, 2025

Thank you all for the opportunity to speak. My name is Jane Fox, and I am the Chair of the Legal Aid Society Attorneys Chapter at the Association of Legal Advocates and Attorneys. We are United Auto Workers Local 2325. UAW 2325 represents over 3,400 active and retired legal services workers at [over thirty non-profit organizations](#) in the NYC metro area and beyond. UAW 2325 members are attorneys, paralegals, social workers, investigators and support staff. We are the workers who guarantee community safety by making sure New Yorkers have access to justice in our courts and vital social services in our city.

While our members are an essential labor force, decades of underfunding has led to untenable working conditions. We are facing an attrition and workload crisis. We are facing a student debt crisis. Our salaries and retirement benefits have failed to keep pace with our counterparts in District Attorneys' offices and Corporation Counsel. This inequity in our funding speaks volumes about who is valued in the legal system. When our wages stagnate, the services our clients receive are degraded.

Our members are dedicated to public service and when we can no longer afford to stay, we go to jobs in the public sector that have better salaries and real pensions such as the Attorney General's Office and Office of Court Administration. Positions requiring experience go unfilled, leaving those who remain overburdened with rising caseloads. We lose talent and institutional knowledge. Attempts to meaningfully fill senior positions have failed. Our salaries are just too low and the cost of living in this city is too high.

In 2025, ALAA has fundamentally changed the terrain of legal services through our organizing. Now, over ninety-five percent of legal services workers in New York City are UAW 2325 members. We will no longer accept a race to the bottom where austerity budgets reign. At every bargaining table, we demand more.

This year, we have aligned the contracts of over 2,100 of our union members across twelve chapters to expire on June 30, 2025 for a potential sector-wide strike in July that could shut down courts across the city. We are committed to bargaining in good faith with our employers. While we do not want to strike, we are prepared to withhold our labor to win a future for the thousands of union members who need better wages for the long-term.

In Fiscal Year 2026, we are asking the Council to fully fund legal services so our employers can meet our core bargaining demands.

Together, we are bargaining to establish a living wage floor of \$70,000 for our entry-level members. We are bargaining to guarantee a minimum 4.5% COLA. We are bargaining to ensure our retirement benefits match what public sector employees get in the state retirement system. And finally, we are bargaining to increase salaries to keep pace with agencies such as the Federal Defenders and Attorney General's office to retain our most experienced members.

Our members are not immune from the affordability crisis that has hit our city hard. Austerity budgets in legal services hurt our union and they hurt New Yorkers. Settling fair contracts centered on these demands will provide stability to our members and ensure working class New Yorkers get the absolute best legal representation. They deserve nothing less.

**Testimony of Olivia Duong
President, Local 3778, DC 37**

Preliminary Budget Hearing - Public Safety

New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026
The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029

March 11, 2025

Good Afternoon Chair Salaam and fellow Councilmembers. My name is Olivia Duong and I am President of Local 3778 of DC 37, representing 300 civilian NYPD professional titles such as Criminalists, City Research Scientists, Architects, and Engineers. I am excited to hear DA Melinda Katz's request for a new forensic crime lab building because I am here to highlight the urgent need for a new facility for our hardworking forensic scientists or Criminalists working at the NYPD Police Laboratory.

WORK WE DO

The Criminalists of the Police Laboratory in the NYPD Detective Bureau are forensic scientists who analyze different types of evidence involved in an alleged crime such as drugs, latent fingerprints, gunshot residue, firearms, etc. using accredited scientific methods. We provide investigative information to detectives and our scientific findings to the Assistant District Attorneys across all 5 boroughs as well as the Federal Government. Criminalists also testify in court as expert witnesses to the results of our analyses. Our testimony educates juries to make informed and fair verdicts. Throughout the pandemic, Criminalists were deemed essential workers for our critical role in public safety and we answered the call.

NEED FOR A NEW FACILITY

The need for a new, updated forensic laboratory building is overdue. Currently, there are just under 400 employees working in forensic chemistry, firearms analysis, and crime scene units out of a five-story building in Queens built in 1930. Originally a department store, refitted as a college university, and most recently a chemical laboratory, firing range, and office building, the current facility is outdated and in a state of constant repair and disrepair. I believe that many years ago our former Forensic Investigations Chief testified right here in this room about how urgently we need a new home. Millions of dollars have been put in and continue to be put in just to ensure the roof does not leak. Our operations have long outgrown the space provided for our testing needs.

We are working out of laboratory spaces where there are 16 to 20 people in a room; there is constant flow of traffic around our fume hoods where hazardous chemicals are being used. Our workers deserve a state-of-the-art facility with ventilated spaces where we can safely handle bulk powder evidence of unknown origin and safe spaces to test live firearms. I ask the Committee to ensure that this is put into the NYPD capital budget on behalf of the civil servants who are rarely seen or heard of but make a profound impact to public safety in NYC. In spite of the many facility challenges we face, my colleagues have strived to maintain the highest quality and integrity of their forensic work for the citizens of NYC every day.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our needs. Below is my contact information.

Olivia Duong

Local 3778 President NYPD Technical Professional Employees

Vice President District Council 37

Local3778president@gmail.com



Arisleyda Skinner
President, Local 5911, DC 37
Before the City Council Public Safety Committee
FY 2026 Preliminary Budget
March 11th, 2025

Good morning, Chair Salaam and fellow Public Safety Committee members. My name is Arisleyda Skinner, and I am the President of Local 5911 of DC 37, representing the 911 operators at the city's two 911 call centers—one in Brooklyn and the other in the Bronx.

I am here today to sound the alarm about the crisis facing this city and ultimately an inevitable disaster, in which I am urgently trying to avoid. There are not enough 911 operators to handle all the calls coming into the 911 system. With a population of 8.2 million people in NYC, we are severely understaffed, with fewer than 1,000 active 911 operators, which results in emergency calls being unanswered. As recently as last Thursday, March 6th, 2025, and for the entire week, when calling 911, the public has been redirected straight to an audio recording with no live operator to answer those calls, and when they are being answered, it's been by operators working on double shifts.

As a former 911 operator, I can say that this is the worst I have ever seen it. Officially, the city reports that it has fewer than 1,500 operators working at the call centers. However, in reality, there are fewer than 1,000 call takers actively fielding calls. The city includes in its numbers operators who are out on leave.

Furthermore, the lack of manpower and the overwhelming workload continues to necessitate even more mandatory/ unlimited overtime. Which potentially can have disastrous effects in the effort to keep the 911 emergency lines open.

lease be aware, both the public and the 911 operators are now suffering.

Moreover, the domino effect currently is that my members are suffering from higher rates of absenteeism, adverse health concerns, and abysmal morale. What is being expected and required of them due to this is unfeasible, insensitive, and irresponsible. They're currently being pushed beyond reasonableness both mentally and physically. With dare I say no end in sight. This for the city of New York and surrounding jurisdictions can be catastrophic, whether it's the least of a 911 emergency or the worst.

This has created a cycle of strain resulting in operators placed under immense pressure, leading to chronic burnout and affecting their well-being and job performance. Ask yourselves how effective and accurate anyone can be when

required to meet this threshold 16 out to 24 hours back to back with less than 4 hours of sleep daily?

My members are currently forced to work double shifts due to mandatory overtime, resulting in widespread sleep deprivation and personal challenges at home. This role demands unwavering focus; even a small error can have catastrophic consequences. To perform effectively, operators must memorize over 600 codes for input into the system and maintain acute attention to every incoming call. It is crucial to address these issues to ensure the safety and well-being of both the operators, NYPD uniform officers, and the public they serve.

The current retention rate among 911 call takers is alarmingly low, and recruitment does not keep pace with turnover. As many employees only remain in their positions for an average of three months. While those in the role express a strong affinity for their work, they are facing significant burnout due to high performance expectations set by management, with disciplinary actions in place for those who do not meet these standards.

To address this critical situation, it is essential for the city to increase the number of 911 call takers and enhance transparency regarding the number of operators actively handling calls each day. Presently, the system is heavily reliant on overtime, which raises concerns about sustainability and the potential for disastrous outcomes. Urgent action is necessary to ensure both the well-being of call takers and the effectiveness of emergency response services.

I am urging the City Council to please get the administration to properly staff 911 before tragedy strikes.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and I will take any questions you may have.



Testimony from the New York City Anti-Violence Project to the Committee on Public Safety

Hadeel Mishal, Lead Organizer

March 11, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam and the Public Safety Committee - my name is Hadeel Mishal, and I am the Lead Organizer at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). We appreciate the Council's past support of our work with LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. During the past several years of increased hate violence and threats against LGBTQ people and many other marginalized communities in New York City, the need for our free counseling and legal services as well as our advocacy and education around community safety has increased.

AVP envisions a world where LGBTQ and HIV-affected people are safe and live free from violence. Our mission is to empower LGBTQ and HIV-affected people and allies to end violence through advocacy and education, and support survivors with counseling and advocacy. AVP is the only LGBTQ-specific victim services agency in the city. We operate a bilingual 24/7 hotline, which includes texting capabilities in addition to voice and online reporting. We provide free and confidential legal services, counseling, community organizing and advocacy. AVP's Training Institute provides professional training for service providers, government leaders, funders, and community members on how to create culturally responsive, inclusive, and affirming programs and spaces for LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence, and to those who are participating in programs designed to change behavior, for those who have caused harm through intimate partner and sexual violence. Discretionary funding from members as well as the funding for the Hate Crimes Prevention Initiative and PATH Forward has ensured that we are able to support LGBTQ people who are survivors of violence as well as collaborate with community-based organizations that provide support to our Jewish, immigrant, Muslim, Latine, and Black siblings and community members around the city.

Over the past couple of years, AVP has been tracking and responding to robberies and assaults originating in LGBTQ bars. Our Bar Safety Initiative has produced outreach materials and we've trained community members to do outreach and support in these spaces, and have designed bar safety kits with top sheets, posters for bars to hang, and drink coasters with our hotline information on them which are in the process of being distributed to 40 LGBTQ bars around the city. We have been able to build partnerships with other organizations such as Good Call to spread



the word about resources that exist for LGBTQ New Yorkers who experience violence and need to access resources for help, reporting, support, etc. We have also worked directly with Councilmembers Bottcher, Caban and Gutierrez to do targeted bar safety outreach in their respective districts.

In close collaboration with Drag Story Hour NYC, we have created a series of community safety trainings and protocols that are being utilized to keep families and performers safe at events all over the city. As anti-LGBTQ sentiment, legislation, and harassment rises across the nation, so do the needs of community members here in New York, and the time and effort required by our staff on caseloads has increased.

Hate crimes have been on the rise across NYC in the past 5 years, with the numbers more than doubling between 2018 to 2024. These numbers are underreported for a variety of reasons- language barriers, mistrust in the police, and fear of retaliation just to name a few. Under the current administration, we anticipate that these numbers will increase in New York City. Time and time again, the solution to violence that the city offers up is to increase the number of police officers. Our answer is to keep funding service organizations like ours, who do the hard work of helping clients report, access resources, and seek justice through the legal system. In order to combat this hate violence, we work in close partnership with organizations like Brooklyn Movement Center, the Arab American Association of New York, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), and the Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE). In November 2024 we held a two day Hate Violence Convening where we got organizations across the city to come together to collectively learn, listen and mobilize to keep our communities safe. We discussed the alternatives to policing that exist within our city through Stand Against Violence East Harlem and Kings Against Violence Initiative. We had a panel discussion on connecting on the groundwork with research and legislation with organizations like the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Brennan Justice Center. We had an antisemitism training led by our siblings at JFREJ and a self-defense workshop led by CAE. There is so much power in the work that organizations like ours do, because we come together constantly to learn, grow, and improve our methods of engagement. Space like ours provide safe spaces for other service providers and organizers to build hope, strategy, and serve as a network of support for our community members to access resources and help.

As an organization that serves and works to empower Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Trans, Gender Non-Conforming (LGBTQGNC) and HIV-affected communities, we've heard first-hand experiences of the harms of increased policing. The community we serve has historically been



profiled and targeted by law enforcement, and we believe in a different approach to create safety, one that doesn't include increased policing. Many of our communities' experience police as a source of violence and do not feel safe going to the police when they face violence. We demand the disbanding of the Strategic Response Group (SRG), Cops out of Pride, and defunding NYPD to prioritize funding to community-based organizations, which are hubs of safety for members of our community. We need to be diverting and defunding the NYPD's bloated \$10 billion budget to fund community-based solutions, including community security at Pride, training and resources for community members to intervene on hate violence, as well as resources for people in the sex trades.

As mentioned above, our community has an adverse relationship with the NYPD. I have asked our team to share some stories that highlight the strained relationship between our community and the NYPD and will share them with you. One of our clinicians' clients called the NYPD to report physical domestic violence and then was arrested instead because their partner weaponized our client's mental-health diagnosis. Another incident was a Spanish speaking client who was drugged and sexually assaulted. The police did not take his report. Our office had to contact the LGBTQ Liaison who then supported the client with their report. Why must our clients face these barriers when reporting? How can this be the solution to the violence LGBTQ people face?

Finally, I will tell you about one of our Legal clients, John. John was wrongfully shot by an NYPD officer years ago. He survived, but his injuries left him with permanent physical disabilities and psychological harm. The NYPD's internal investigation found that the officer had been in the wrong. Paul is an immigrant, and despite living in this country for decades, his claim for asylum has not been heard to this day. He qualifies for immigration relief due to having been the victim of a violent attack; however, in this instance, he is being stonewalled by the NYPD in his pursuit of immigrant status because his attacker was an officer. Our office has been working diligently to get John the status he deserves and justice for the violence he suffered.

Instead of giving the NYPD the billions of dollars they get from the city every year, the City Council should invest in community-based organizations to lead efforts to keep our communities safe and healthy. Community organizers, community members and leaders, faith institutions and folks on the ground are the best equipped and positioned to outreach to and protect their own communities. AVP is also a leading member of the NYC Against Hate coalition, where we believe and work towards an investment in community-methods of safety that are not reliant on law enforcement and are instead predicated on community education and intervention. We ask



for the reallocation of NYPD funds to community-based organizations and to community-centered social services and public health.

We have spoken with and heard from our community members that the increasing presence of police at Pride over the past decade has been a deterrent for their participation because they know they will not be safe. Most of all, police should not be at a march whose origins began with queer and trans people of color and sex workers resisting and rebelling against police violence and police raids in the Stonewall rebellion.

The City Council is in a position to do right by New Yorkers. By disbanding the Strategic Response Group of the NYPD, keeping cops out of pride, and diverting funds from NYPD's incredibly large budget, community-based organizations can be in a better position to keep their communities safe. We keep us safe. And we call on you to help us keep each other safe.

AVP appreciates the opportunity to testify before you today on these vital community concerns, and we look forward to our continued partnerships to build community-led safety for LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities.



New York City Anti-Violence Project
116 Nassau Street, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10038
212.714.1184 voice | 212.714.2627 fax
212.714.1141 24-hour hotline

Testimony from the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP)

To the Committee on Public Safety

At the Preliminary Budget Hearing

Submitted March 13, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and the Members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Jonnie Gillam, I use she/they pronouns, and I work as a paralegal in the legal department of the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). We deeply appreciate the Council's and this Committee's past support of our work on behalf of LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. Our organization provides critical support for the at-risk communities we serve as they navigate the criminal justice system, a service which is more vital than ever as our city's TGNC, immigrant, and sex worker communities face attacks from the Trump administration. In this time of crisis, we humbly ask that the Committee support our vital work.

In addition to free legal services for survivors, AVP provides free counseling, community organizing, advocacy, and the country's only 24/7 LGBTQ crisis hotline. We are the city's only LGBTQ-specific victim services agency, and the community ties we have built serving that role for the last 45 years are irreplaceable. Our community organizers are on the front lines of the movement to push back against the racist, transphobic, and discriminatory policies of the Trump administration, and our direct service providers get daily first-hand experience of the harms being suffered by the communities we serve. We ourselves are survivors; I come before you as a trans woman, no longer legally allowed to apply for a passport or serve in my country's military. Our staff includes immigrants, Black, Latine, Muslim, and Jewish folk, people of trans, nonbinary, and queer experience, and survivors of all kinds. We stand with our siblings, and will continue to do so, come what may.

Our work is deeply embedded in the criminal justice system. This is particularly true here at Legal, though our client services and advocacy departments also do much work with survivors



New York City Anti-Violence Project
116 Nassau Street, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10038
212.714.1184 voice | 212.714.2627 fax
212.714.1141 24-hour hotline

navigating the legal, carceral, and immigration systems. Many survivors occupy the role of both “victim” and “perpetrator”, and our legal team represents folks operating on all levels of the criminal justice system, from complaining witnesses to defendants. We find that these roles can often switch, and survivors’ access to free legal support can vary widely throughout that process. For that reason, organizations like ours which can provide holistic legal services are critical for underserved and at-risk communities like the ones we serve. Many of our clients are current or former sex workers, who have frequently been denied access to “traditional” work on the basis of their gender presentation. These clients are in particular need of our legal assistance, as their interactions with the criminal justice system are complex and they often cannot find culturally competent help at other legal aid organizations. We offer victim’s rights advocacy, criminal defendant advocacy, affirmative and defensive representation in immigration court, assistance interfacing with the police, representation in family and housing court, support reporting human rights violations to the City Commission and State Division of Human Rights, and more. These are confusing systems, not designed with the needs of survivors from marginalized communities in mind. Our trauma-informed approach and expertise in LGBTQ issues allows us to provide critical aid to survivors that would not or could not access support from other kinds of organizations.

The Trump administration has made no bones about its hatred for the communities we serve and belong to, especially trans and queer folks and immigrants. Nearly all our clients belong to one of these communities, frequently both, and we’re seeing firsthand the effect that direct federal discrimination is having on their lives. Our trans asylum seekers, survivors who have experienced unspeakable suffering and are in this city searching for a safe haven from transphobic violence, have found that the federal immigration system now discriminates against them as a matter of course. At best, they’re being forced to misgender and deadname themselves on official documents, or else face rejection; at worse, they’re being denied relief, on the basis that they “lied” on their application by giving the government their preferred gender. This



New York City Anti-Violence Project
116 Nassau Street, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10038
212.714.1184 voice | 212.714.2627 fax
212.714.1141 24-hour hotline

mistreatment is not limited to the immigration space. We're seeing reports of trans folks in the federal criminal justice system facing harassment, and worse, in courts and in custody. Our organization is not immune, either. With Trump's allies in DOGE combing through the federal budget in search of "DEI", "woke", and "transgenderist" line items, we expect to lose federal funding in the near term – indeed, we've already lost a chunk of grant money in January and are already having to make difficult readjustments to our budget. With the constant risk of ICE raids, IRS audits, and other intentional federal attacks on our office, our organization is at profound risk even as our frontline work is more vital than ever.

In my oral testimony I told you about our client Isabella, who is a trans immigrant facing deportation. Isabella fled Perú after a lifetime of sexual assault and brutal transphobic violence. Her time in the United States has not been easy – Isabella has been involved in sex work and was arrested in Florida, though she was not detained and currently lives here in New York City. She has also been stopped by federal immigration agents and is in deportation proceedings, a process which takes years. Because of her arrest she is subject to the newly signed "Laken Riley Act", a racist act of Congress that makes immigrants subject to summary deportation without the opportunity for defense on the basis of merely having been *arrested* for certain crimes, even if no charges were filed. Because of this, she is terrified to be picked up by ICE on the street and is nervous about being around any aspect of the criminal justice system. If she were picked up again now, under the new Trump paradigm, she could be deported within the week. We have worked tirelessly (sometimes literally) to see that Isabella has access to justice. We were instrumental in negotiating for her a plea deal in Florida for which she will serve only probation and arranged for her probation to be served here in New York. We've been accompanying her to all her court dates and meetings with her probation officer so that she feels safe inside a United States courthouse. When she had to travel to Florida to meet with the judge, I arranged for legal aid organizations to look after her in Miami, and I personally stayed up all night ready to head to JFK in case she was detained by ICE at the airport. She has become sufficiently comfortable



New York City Anti-Violence Project
116 Nassau Street, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10038
212.714.1184 *voice* | 212.714.2627 *fax*
212.714.1141 *24-hour hotline*

working with us that she wants to report to the police a recent sexual assault that she experienced, trusting us to keep her safe during the process. She has told us that if it were not for our support, she may have fled her court date rather than face the risk of summary deportation, which would have had a crushing impact on her ability ever to attain legal status in this country.

Isabella is only one of hundreds of such clients that our legal office serves, not to mention countless others who receive support from our clinicians and hotline staff. These populations need us now more than ever, and our expertise could not be replaced by another organization if the administration were to successfully strong-arm us into closing our doors. In this time of heightened risk for our clients and for ourselves, we ask that the members of the Committee on Public Safety of the City Council of New York allocate us as much funding as can be spared. Trans, immigrant, queer, and BIPOC communities in this city are under attack, and we need your support to stand up for them. Thank you for your time today.



Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety

March 11, 2025

Written Testimony

I want to thank Chair Yusef Salaam for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation (AAF) the opportunity to testify on the public safety needs of our community. My name is Andrew Sta. Ana, I am the Interim Co-Executive Director at AAF, representing the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

In 2025, public safety for New York's Asian community is more tenuous than ever. A sharp rise in anti-immigrant policies at the federal level, combined with ICE's increasing encroachment on city authority and a rise in targeted violence and rhetoric against Asian communities, has created a perfect storm. In a city millions have known as a Sanctuary, these events have created conditions that undermine our community's trust in the systems meant to protect us.

For our community, Public Safety means that survivors of domestic violence can seek help without the fear of detention and removal. Public safety means workers can go to and from work, take public transit, and report wage theft and unsafe working conditions. Public safety means that community members can speak up and seek help if they see seniors, children, and other neighbors in danger. Public Safety means families can send their children to school and seek hospital treatment. However, our current climate does not reinforce these basic principles of public safety. At AAF, we understand that during this unstable climate, our member organizations—guided by the voices of the broader AAPI community—play a vital role in maintaining public safety.

Indeed, through this and previous crises, such as the pandemic and the resurgence of anti-Asian violence, our member organizations exhibit resilience and courage. They lead the way in numerous service sectors and programming organized by the Asian American Federation. Together, we work to amplify our collective voices, secure our seat at the table with policymakers, and champion fairness and justice for low-income, vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. However, our ongoing resilience and success are not sustainable without continued support from the City Council.

Implementing RISE: Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment Program to Protect Vulnerable Asian Immigrants

AAF's leadership has established a strong infrastructure to respond to attacks on New York's vibrant immigrant community. From 2017 to 2019, AAF built a rapid response network

involving ten Asian-led, Asian-serving nonprofits to enhance access to immigration legal services for low-income and vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. AAF has been instrumental in guiding the community when anti-immigrant policies threaten public safety.

In FY 2026, our **RISE (Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment)** initiative will build on our successful track record to implement a comprehensive rapid response program aimed at increasing Asian immigrants' access to vital immigration-related services and supporting the nonprofits that serve them. Specifically, we will:

1. ****Convene an Immigration Referral Network****: We will strengthen our member nonprofits' internal capacity to provide immigration-related services, connect organizations with legal service groups, and foster collaboration with experts. Additionally, we will support community education and outreach projects. This network will enhance case management support for individuals and families with limited English proficiency.
2. ****Provide Know Your Rights Training****: We will offer training on best practices and clients' rights to Asian-serving groups, equipping them with the knowledge and resources necessary to protect their clients and organizations.
3. ****Launch an In-Language Media Strategy****: We will implement a media strategy to combat the widespread misinformation and disinformation in Asian communities regarding immigration policies and their implications, or lack thereof, on public benefits and systems.

By integrating these efforts, we aim to create a more robust and coordinated support system for Asian immigrants and the organizations that serve them.

Sustaining Anti-Violence Programming: Hope Against Hate

As each wave of anti-Asian violence and anti-immigrant sentiment continues to ripple through our communities in new ways, many Asian New Yorkers are increasingly afraid to leave their homes. They are reluctant to engage with the broader community. Indeed, recent increases in Islamophobia—affecting South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities—as well as the resurgence of Anti-Asian sentiment following the November 2024 presidential election underscore the ongoing threats faced by Asian New Yorkers.

Fortunately, AAF has exercised bold leadership through difficult climates. Since its launch in 2021, AAF's **Hope Against Hate Campaign (HAH)** has addressed the persistent and evolving threats of anti-Asian violence. Sustaining HAH is crucial for providing essential safety programs in multiple languages, including safety training, youth programs, and victim support services. To respond to our community's needs, AAF will strengthen the Hope Against Hate Campaign network to provide coordinated, proven, ready-to-go interventions to sustainably increase street safety and provide wrap-around support for victims of anti-Asian assaults. In FY 26, we will expand our network of 30+ community-based organizations. We will give in-language safety training, victim support services, and youth programming through community outreach and education to those impacted by anti-Asian violence.

From January to December of 2022 alone, the Asian American Federation (AAF), Stop AAPI Hate, the New York Police Department (NYPD), and the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) reported more than 3,480 incidents of race-based discrimination against Asians—a mere fraction of the total incidents that occur. Such underreporting is because 70% of Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, and systemic factors like high rates of poverty, limited English proficiency (LEP), and lack of immigration status deter reporting and reinforce continued systemic inequities.

During the last three years, AAF has achieved the following through our Hope Against Hate Campaign to address anti-Asian violence:

- Re-granted over \$6 million to over 30 Asian-serving member and partner agencies to implement the various program areas of the Hope Against Hate Campaign;
- Trained over 11,000 individuals in conflict de-escalation, situational awareness, and self-defense strategies;
- Reached 8,500 youth through community education, anti-bullying initiatives, and the provision of emotional and mental health support;
- Referred over 6,900 people to various support services, including protective accompaniment, reporting assistance, anti-bullying initiatives, and behavioral and mental health services;
- Provided community education events to over 2,800 community members, including policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders, on anti-Asian violence and its impact.

In FY 26, AAF will strengthen its network of 30+ community-based organizations to deliver in-language safety training, victim support services, and youth programming. Through convenings, community outreach, and public education, we will continue to address the needs of those most impacted by anti-Asian violence and respond to emerging needs while convening partners regularly to foster collaboration and share strategies to combat hate.

Our CBOs are already working with community partners and members, and we urge the City to support this work significantly.

Our budget ask is simple: that our nonprofits be provided enough resources to implement and expand essential services to support our diverse community's public safety and mental health needs.

We urge the City Council and members of the Committee to consider the following recommendations to make sure Asian New Yorkers feel safe in their city:

- Support efforts by trusted Asian-led, Asian-serving organizations to centralize the reporting of incidents to connect victims to services they need;
- Increase funding for anti-violence and immigrant safety programming, like that being implemented as part of our Hope Against Hate (HAH) Campaign and RISE (Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment);

- Support recovery services in Asian languages to help victims heal from the trauma and increase access to mental health services for all communities to reduce harm.

In an environment where our communities are surrounded by misinformation, fear, increasing isolation, and, unfortunately, hate violence, AAF believes it is more critical than ever that we reinforce our connections to support safety for the entire Asian and Immigrant community. Supporting these initiatives helps keep Asian New Yorkers informed, connected, resourced, and safe.

This testimony encapsulates a glimpse of AAF's work to serve Asian New Yorkers, reinforce public safety, and keep our communities informed, healthy, and safe. Our other programs address mental health, civic engagement, language access, and support for older adults and Non-profits. Here are our Citywide funding requests that we need your support for to help fund critical work going toward our community:

- Support AAF's work and priorities through:
 - AAPI Community Support (\$250,000)
 - Communities of Color Non-Profit Stabilization Fund (\$150,000)
 - CUNY Citizenship NOW! Program (\$250,000)
 - Hate Crimes Prevention (\$200,000)
 - Immigrant Health Initiative (\$100,000)
 - Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (\$140,000)
 - Speakers Initiative (\$400,000)
 - Support Our Older Adults (\$100,000)
 - Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (\$700,000)
- Support funding to the AAPI Community Support Initiative at **\$7.5 million**. AAF requests a budget allocation from this Initiative of **\$250,000** to support ongoing support for our Hope Against Hate Campaign.
- Continue to fund the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund at **\$7.5 million**. AAF requests a budget allocation of \$150,000 from this initiative to support our technical assistance work.
- Fund the development of a worker cooperative for Asian language interpretation at **\$700,000**. We also ask, in partnership with African Communities Together, Masa, and New York Immigration Coalition, for **\$2.25 million** to support a community interpreter bank (CIB).
- Invest **\$120,000** to support the operation and expansion of AAF's small business programs, such as technical assistance and merchant organizing.

We look forward to working alongside the City Council and members of this Committee to restore the sense of public safety in our community by prioritizing their needs and the service providers they depend on.

Oral Testimony

I want to thank Chair Yusef Salaam for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation (AAF) the opportunity to testify on the public safety needs of our community. My name is Andrew Sta. Ana, I am the Interim Co-Executive Director at AAF, representing the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

In 2025, public safety for New York's Asian community is at risk due to a rise in anti-immigrant policies, ICE's encroachment on city authority, and increased violence against Asians. These factors undermine trust in the systems meant to ensure safety in a city long seen as a Sanctuary.

At AAF, we understand that during this unstable climate, our member organizations—guided by the voices of the broader AAPI community—play a vital role in maintaining public safety. We urge you to support the following:

AAF has built a strong infrastructure to support New York's immigrant community. In FY 2026, our **RISE (Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment)** initiative will implement a rapid response program to enhance Asian immigrants' access to essential immigration services.

1. ****Convene an Immigration Referral Network****: Strengthen member nonprofits' capacity to provide immigration services.
2. ****Provide Know Your Rights Training****.
3. ****Launch an In-Language Media Strategy****: to combat misinformation in Asian communities.

As anti-Asian violence and anti-immigrant sentiment rise, many Asian New Yorkers feel increasingly fearful and isolated.

Since its launch in 2021, AAF's **Hope Against Hate Campaign (HAH)** has boldly addressed these threats. Sustaining HAH is essential for delivering safety programs, including multilingual safety training, youth programs, and victim support services.

We urge the City Council and members of the Committee to consider the following recommendations to make sure Asian New Yorkers feel safe in their city:

- Support Asian-led organizations in connecting victims to necessary services.
- Increase funding for anti-violence and immigrant safety programs like our Hope Against Hate (HAH) Campaign and RISE (Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment).
- Provide recovery services in Asian languages to aid victims' healing and improve mental health access.

In an environment where our communities are surrounded by misinformation, fear, increasing isolation, and, unfortunately, hate violence, AAF believes it is more critical than ever to support initiatives that reinforce our common connections to support public safety. We look forward to working alongside the City Council and members of this Committee to restore the sense of public safety in our community.



New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
Preliminary Budget Hearings – Public Safety
March 11, 2025

Hello, Chair Salaam and members of the City Council. I'm Nadia Chait, the Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy at CASES. We know that NYC's most deeply rooted problems are solved by supporting, not jailing, people. Our programs do what jails and punitive programming cannot: restore hope by giving people opportunities to heal, grow, and succeed in their communities. Unfortunately, Mayor Adams' proposed budget pushes further investments in failed strategies, rather than supporting a vision of true public safety and justice.

This budget must invest in the services that will close Rikers Island, a jail complex filled by torture, brutality and death. Two people have died in DOC custody in the last month alone. Rather than deepening investments in failed systems, we must invest in the work to actual build community safety and help people reach their potential, not punishment.

The proposed \$8.9 million cut to Alternatives to Incarceration, and the \$8 million cut to Reentry Programs, must be reversed. We operate a range of ATIs, which not only keep people out of incarceration but transform lives so people have the supports they need to avoid future criminal legal system involvement. We receive \$9.5 million annually through MOCJ ATI contracts. Without this funding, we simply would not be able to sustain our ATI programs, which helped **over 1,800 people avoid incarceration** in FY24. Our ATIs include:

- Nathaniel ACT, which serves people with serious mental illness and felony charges, by providing wraparound supports. The team-based approach includes psychiatry, medication, therapy, nursing, substance use care, housing placements, court intake and court coordination, ensuring that the full range of a client's needs are met. Among clients who successfully complete the program, *none are reconvicted of a violent felony, and less than 5% are reconvicted of any felony*. The program decreases homelessness by 70% and cuts psychiatric hospitalizations in half.
- ROAR: Reframing Opportunity, Alternatives & Resilience, which provides young people with mentorship, employment support, connections to education, and direct access to mental health services at CASES. ROAR graduates are able to engage in voluntary services following successful completion of the program to ensure sustained support in the community.
- Nathaniel Community Success, an ATI and ATD for people with mental health needs or co-occurring mental health and substance use needs. Clients receive a specialized clinical assessment to guide their treatment, which can include a variety of evidence-based therapies, including motivational interviewing and DBT. We closely coordinate services with our mental health clinic, to ensure a seamless transition for clients at the end of their mandate. Clients can also be linked to our Health Home Care Coordination program to help tackle complex health needs.
- NewSTART: a rapid intervention for people with a history of low-level convictions, designed to disrupt the cycle of incarceration. Starting at arraignment, newSTART

rapidly engages clients in services and conducts an intensive assessment to identify client needs and connect clients to services including housing, mental health care, and employment support.

We are proud to be members of the ATI/Reentry Coalition, an ecosystem of providers that we work closely with to serve the complex needs of our clients. ATIs and reentry services are a key part of reducing the population on Rikers Island. By investing in and scaling these programs, we can create an approach to public safety that focuses on helping individuals heal and desist from crime, rather than endless, ineffective and inhumane cycles of punishment. The administration and the City Council should invest heavily in ATIs and reentry programming this budget.

Maintain Supervised Release Funding, Including Intensive Case Management Pilot Funds

We provided pretrial services to about 7,500 people last year who faced criminal charges in Manhattan. Our program ensures not only that people return to court, but that individuals are connected with the services and supports to be successful in the community. Our Rapid Response Treatment team takes people with immediate mental health, substance use or housing needs directly from arraignment to psychiatric treatment, substance use programs, and safe haven housing, ensuring that people are immediately stabilized and then connected to longer-term supports. Therapists from our mental health clinic are co-located within our Harlem supervised release check-in program, to provide robust access to mental health supports without requiring clients to find time to go to a different program location.

We created an innovative track for young people in supervised release, Planning Alternatives & Creating Community, that provides additional supports to young people, including transitional employment, a resource coordinator, and youth specialists. PACC works:

- participants are 20% more likely to successfully complete supervised release than other individuals in the program
- 91% of participants did not have a felony rearrest, even though 66% entered the program on a felony charge
- 42% of participants had their cases dismissed
- 26% of participants choose to engage with voluntary services after their mandate ends

Maintain \$4.5 Million for ICM Pilot

Building on the success of our supervised release program overall and the targeted, intensive work of PACC, we were pleased to be selected as a pilot location for the Intensive Case Management program (ICM). ICM is intended to help people who have historically been less likely to succeed in supervised release to access the supports they need to comply with court mandates and to reduce their criminal legal system involvement. The program launched in January 2024. We were fully staffed as of fall 2024, as the program did not have a start-up phase. We have served 550 clients since the start of the program.

How ICM Works

- Early Intervention: Staff connect with eligible clients at arraignment for intake and immediate referral to services.
- Intensive Mobile Support: Clients receive weekly in-person check-ins— not just in an office, but where they live and work.
- Holistic Care: A multi-disciplinary team connects clients to housing, employment, mental health and substance use treatment services.

- Court Compliance & Advocacy: Staff navigate the court process with clients, helping them to stay engaged and out of jail.

The Impact of ICM

- Client A: A had multiple open cases across several open boroughs. ICM staff met with A in their apartment, eliminating an immediate barrier to compliance. We identified immediate needs for childcare, employment, immigration assistance, and housing. With our support, A secured benefits, was able to pay back rent, and hired an immigration attorney.
- Client B: B experienced serious mental illness and was not taking his medications as prescribed. ICM met with B in their home, and developed a medication reminder system that B could maintain, leading to a significant increase in mental health. This enabled B to secure two job interviews, resulting in a job offer. They successfully completed the program in May 2024 and have avoided re-arrest.
- Client C: C struggled with heroin addiction for over 40 years, but with the support of ICM, C was able to complete inpatient treatment and enroll in intensive outpatient treatment. She has been sober for 3 months and is on track to now have her case resolved without incarceration.
- Client D: D was initially hesitant to engage in services, and might not have gone to an office location. However, an ICM peer specialist was able to quickly establish a bond and learn the client's goals of obtaining their vital documents, gaining employment and stable housing. ICM connected the client to appropriate services and the client now has stable housing with the Fortune Society and employment. They successfully exited the program and have avoided re-arrest.

ICM is working, not just to increase court compliance on the current charge, but to transform people's lives, leading to desistance from crime. By creating a trusted relationship that starts at arraignment and continues in the community, ICM breaks down barriers and gets people the support they need.

Reduce Funding for DOC

As members of the Campaign to Close Rikers, CASES also urges the City to stop funneling money into a failed system of incarceration that is so unable to maintain basic safety that a federal receivership is pending. To that end, the budget should **eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff**. The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed 5,908 and 1,152 positions were vacant. DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies, DOC could realize cost savings of \$149.6M annually. Further savings can be achieved by **reducing overtime spending**, by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned. These savings must be invested in community-based alternatives, including ATI, ATD and reentry programs.

Testimony Regarding:
Testimony in Support of ALAA Sectoral Bargaining

Presented Before:
The New York City Council's Committee on Public Safety

Presented By:
Bryan Fotino, CMS Union
Association of Legal Advocates and Attorneys, UAW Local 2325

March 11, 2025

My name is Bryan Fotino. I'm a Tenant Organizer at Catholic Migration Services (CMS) and a proud member of the Association of Legal Advocates and Attorneys (ALAA).

Today, we heard a lot about police and prisons, but I want to talk about what public safety means to me. At CMS, I've organized buildings across Queens—bridging connections among English, Spanish, and Bangla-speaking tenants to demand better living conditions. In one campaign, I organized tenants in Jackson Heights to sue their landlord in housing court. Through a combination of legal action, rallies, and media coverage, we pressured the landlord to make long-overdue repairs. One tenant, previously living with mold in his shower and a broken window, now has a safe home and the confidence to continue advocating alongside his neighbors.

While ALAA members are an essential labor force, decades of underfunding have led to untenable working conditions. I want to keep doing this work, but it's incredibly difficult to get by on my salary—especially after paying taxes, rent, groceries, laundry, utilities, medical bills, and student loans. And for our office assistants and those supporting children or caring for elders, it's even harder.

However, ALAA has aligned the collective bargaining agreements of over 2,000 of our union members to expire on June 30, 2025 for a potential sector-wide strike. If management will not meet our demands for fair compensation and realistic workloads, our members are prepared to walk off the job. A strike will paralyze courts across New York City, which depend on our members showing up each day.

In order to settle fair contracts for our members, we are asking the City Council to fully fund legal services, including **at least a 50% increase in Stabilizing NYC funding and at least a 35% increase in Housing Preservation Initiative funding**. This will allow our employers to meet our core demands:

- Establishing a living wage floor of \$70,000 for all legal services workers.
- Guaranteeing an annual minimum 4.5% COLA for all legal services workers.

- Providing a contribution equivalent to the New York State pension system to our existing retirement accounts.

Courtney Bryan, Executive Director

Table of Contents

Page 1

- Center for Justice Innovation New York City Program Map

Page 2 - Page 7

- Written testimony for submission to 3/11/25 City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing of the Committee on Public Safety

Page 9 - Page 16

- Summary of FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Proposals

Page 17 - 21

- Letters of Support;
 - Bronx County District Attorney
 - Richmond County District Attorney
 - Kings County District Attorney (forthcoming)
 - Manhattan District Attorney (forthcoming)

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

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

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

MULTI-BOROUGH

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

BRONX

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

BROOKLYN

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

QUEENS

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

Staten Island

Brooklyn

Queens

Manhattan

Citywide

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

For More Information
Hailey Nolasco
Senior Director of Government Relations
hnolasco@innovatingjustice.org

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

Good afternoon Chair Salaam and esteemed members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Hailey Nolasco and I serve as the Senior Director of Government Relations for the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center).

The Center for Justice Innovation is a community justice organization that centers safety and racial justice in partnership with communities, courts, and the people most impacted. We have worked for nearly 30 years to build safe, thriving communities by creating and operating innovative programs, conducting field-leading research, and sharing what we learn with justice systems and communities across the country. As an organization that works closely with both courts and communities, we're uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between them, fostering communication, understanding, and trust. Whether we're helping to build stronger futures for people in the justice system, training community members as researchers in charge of their own stories, or working to ensure everyone can live in a truly safe neighborhood, we are driven by the belief that communities are crucial to transforming justice.

Today, I will be discussing a selection of our Community Justice programming that supports the Council's efforts to improve safety across all five boroughs. We appreciate Council's investment thus far in Center programming, and look forward to continuing this valued partnership in the upcoming fiscal year.

Bronx Community Justice Center

The Bronx Community Justice Center works to create a safer, more equitable South Bronx through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. Using a neighborhood-centric, localized model, meaningful engagement ensures programming is deeply embedded locally and thus maximally effective.

This area is highly impacted by the criminal justice system and community violence, with disproportionately higher rates of incarceration, violent crime, and disinvestment. In 2023, the violent crime rate was more than triple the citywide rate.¹

Most recently, gun violence has increased in the Bronx, particularly among youth. In 2024, Bronx youth accounted for 45 percent of the city's youth shooting victims, a 17 percent increase from 2023. The South Bronx has a high rate of disconnected youth, with 30 percent of youth ages 16-24 out of school and not working, the highest high school drop-out rate in the city. The area has one of the highest numbers of juveniles held in secure detention in NYC.²

This indicates an urgent need for programming for this population. To meet this need, the

¹ New York University Furman Center. (2024b, May 21). Mott Haven/Melrose Neighborhood Profile. <https://furmancenter.org/neighborhoods/view/mott-haven-melrose>

² New York City Mayor's Office of Youth Employment. (2021b, January). Connecting Our Future: 2020 Disconnected Youth Task Force Report. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/youthemployment/downloads/pdf/dytf-connecting-our-future-report.pdf>

Bronx Community Justice Center is requesting support for two vital youth-focused programs, Insight Initiatives and In-She-Spire.

Insight Initiatives is a community-based program for young people ages 14 to 24. The program is specifically designed to engage youth who have been impacted by violence and/or gang involvement. Insight Initiatives utilizes a localized program model that is strongly rooted in the neighborhoods the program serves and where youth live. Insight Initiatives leverages community engagement as the foundation of its successful approach. It uses a transformative, healing-centered model to allow youth to take accountability for their actions, contribute to their communities, and address root causes to prevent future justice involvement. Many of the participants, who are justice-involved youth, have also experienced harm and trauma which oftentimes leads to substance misuse as a coping mechanism. As such, with support from City Council, the Justice Center hopes to expand Insight Initiatives to also provide support for justice system-involved youth struggling with substance misuse.

In-She-Spire works to create a safe, empowering, and nurturing environment designed to address the unique needs of young women, femmes, and gender-expansive individuals between the ages of 14 and 24. In the South Bronx, this population encounters a distinct set of challenges, resulting in fractured community bonds, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and involvement in gangs. Project In-She-Spire is dedicated to fostering meaningful social connections among these young women and gender-expansive youth, with the aim of supporting positive development, strengthening resilience, and boosting self-esteem. Project In-She-Spire's goal is to provide participants with the vital skills and resources needed to navigate systemic obstacles and overcome adversity, ultimately building a brighter future.

Staten Island Justice Center

In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY2023, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten Island residents. The results of the survey helped shape the Community Justice Center planning process as well as the development of several initiatives being piloted in FY2024, also with City Council support. The Staten Island Justice Center seeks continued funding for FY2026 in order to fully implement several of the piloted initiatives, including youth and placemaking programs.

The Staten Island Justice Center has provided an array of programs to the entire borough of Staten Island since 2009. In 2024, the Justice Center served over 2,500 youth and adults, providing alternatives to incarceration and detention, diversion options, as well as individual and group programming in the areas of mentorship, work readiness and placement, civic engagement activities, positive prosocial engagement, health and wellness, and peer leadership—all with the unifying goal of supporting people in building successful lives and avoiding justice system involvement.³

³ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

EmpowerHER

At the Center's Staten Island Justice Center (SIJC) and the Queens Community Justice Center (QCJC), there has been an increase in the number of female participants (including female-identifying participants) referred to Alternative to Incarceration programming, a trend that is reflected nationwide.⁴ The Staten Island Justice Center has been offering ATI programming since 2020. In its first full year of operation, 2021, Staten Island ATI programming served 94 female participants representing about 21 percent of ATI participants. This number has steadily increased each year, and in 2024, 200 women were served through Staten Island's ATI program, approximately 29 percent of the 678 participants served. The Queens Community Justice Center has also seen a notable increase in the number of female participants referred to its ATI program: in 2022, Queens ATI programming served 91 female participants; this increased to 325 in 2023 and 334 in 2024.⁵ These upward trends in both Staten Island and Queens underscores the growing demand for resources for women and emphasizes the importance of responsive support for female participants in ATI programs. To meet this rising need, the Staten Island and Queens Justice Centers are requesting funding from City Council to develop specialized ATI programming to meet the unique needs of female-identifying participants.

Research shows that women who come into contact with the justice system often have unique needs and experiences that differ significantly from those of men. Women involved in the justice system are more likely to have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse compared to their male counterparts.⁶ In addition, they often report higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.⁷ Women involved in the justice system may face greater challenges securing stable, well-paying jobs upon release, impacting their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Finally, a large portion of women involved in the justice system are mothers and often the primary caretakers for their children.⁸

Internal data collected from female participants at the Staten Island Justice Center and the Queens Community Justice Center support these findings. At the Staten Island Justice Center, 29.5 percent of women served in the ATI program were flagged as having mental health needs and 62 percent flagged for employment needs, which correlated with economic challenges. At the Queens Community Justice Center, education, employment, and housing are consistently identified as the top areas requiring attention for women. In 2023, 18.4 percent of female participants flagged education as a need, 56.4 percent cited employment, and 26.7 percent identified housing. By 2024, these figures increased, with 30.2 percent of females flagging education needs, 61.1 percent indicating employment needs, and 31.9 percent highlighting

⁴ Budd, K. M. (2024, July 23). *Incarcerated Women and Girls*. The Sentencing Project.

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/incarcerated-women-and-girls/>

⁵ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

⁶ *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13).

<https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

⁷ Council on Criminal Justice. (2024, July). *Women's Justice: A Preliminary Assessment of Women in the Criminal Justice System*.

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

⁸ *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13).

<https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

housing as a priority.⁹ Addressing these unique needs with gender-informed approaches can lead to better outcomes for female ATI participants.

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

Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement (RISE) Project

The RISE Project transforms responses to intimate partner violence (IPV), focusing specifically on its intersection with gun violence. Gun violence and intimate partner violence are often viewed as separate problems that require different responses, but neighborhoods impacted by high rates of gun violence also have the highest levels of reported domestic violence incidents. Access to a gun makes it five times more likely that a partner experiencing abuse will be killed.¹⁰

The project works with 30 gun violence prevention programs Citywide to train staff on intimate partner violence, facilitate workshops and ongoing groups with youth participants, and execute community events raising awareness around intimate partner violence.

Additionally, RISE provides support and technical assistance when gun violence sites are responding to incidents of violence that are IPV related. This partnership with gun violence prevention programs has provided important access to information to help identify sites where gun violence is likely to occur. As a large percentage of New York City gun violence is IPV related, anti-violence programs need to improve their ability to understand IPV dynamics. Additionally, partners have benefited through the education and prevention efforts that RISE provides to youth and the community at large. RISE also benefits from this partnership, because gun violence prevention programs that are on the ground 24/7 in neighborhoods with the highest rates of IPV are building relationships with individuals who are engaged in violence. This allows RISE direct access to a high-risk population to offer them much needed resources.

RISE also provides direct case management services for individuals experiencing intimate partner violence and provides healing circles for individuals causing harm to acknowledge and change their attitudes and behaviors. RISE also facilitates programming for youth from neighborhoods most impacted by gun and intimate partner violence. Youth engage in a seven-week program to develop a place-based project to increase public safety with a healthy relationships lens. With offerings in areas such as visual arts and journaling, RISE engages participants to design and create a culminating interactive community activation. The approach is rooted in community healing, neighborhood-specific, and place-based principles. The

⁹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

¹⁰ Center for Justice Innovation. *Rise Project*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/rise-project>

culminating exhibit included pieces on identity, healthy relationships, boundaries, consent and more. Additionally, youth participants have hosted a teen dating panel for their peers where they discussed topics relevant to healthy relationships and community accountability.

Moreover, RISE reaches tens of thousands of individuals each year through public campaigns (e.g., via social media), community events, and direct engagement to change community norms, increase access to resources and information, and ultimately prevent intimate partner violence. Last year (FY24), RISE directly engaged 5,222 people through a variety of community events and services, such as workshops, trainings, crisis support, small business poster board campaigns, citywide barbershop talks, and community healing responses to intimate partner violence-related incidents.¹¹

With continued and increased investments in RISE, we can further our capacity to reach more individuals experiencing intimate partner violence through a community-centered approach.

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives (NSI) supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), a resident-driven community organizing initiative and comprehensive strategy to enhance public safety and strengthen community well-being in 30 public housing developments.

NSI enlists residents, City agencies, and community-based partners to help move beyond enforcement and address the factors underlying safety – providing opportunities for work and play, health and well-being, and youth development; promoting activated, well-maintained spaces through community and human-centered design; and improving trust between neighbors with a responsive and just government. Their mission is to improve community safety in places impacted by historic disinvestment by creating opportunities for residents to identify key issues underlying crime and participate in the decision-making to address these priorities. Through NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), we harness the collective expertise of residents, government, and community partners to drive meaningful dialogue, problem-solving, and, ultimately, create positive change at both the neighborhood and administrative levels.

NeighborhoodStat connects residents to social services and community resources; increases the security and quality of shared community space by working with residents to physically improve and maintain public space, thereby enhancing a positive sense of ownership; increases civic engagement; and enhances the capacity of residents to improve public safety and wellbeing in their communities. Adopting a participatory justice model, NeighborhoodStat works with local organizers to provide direct investment into historically underserved communities and ensures that those most affected and most marginalized, especially those who have been historically left out of these conversations, have a say in improving health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic stability, physical space, and youth development policies that affect their lives.

Last year, the program reached over 50,000 residents of the New York City Housing Authority utilizing the following strategies:¹²

¹¹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). RISE_FY Yearly Quarterly Tracker – FY24.

¹² Center for Justice Innovation. *Neighborhood Safety Initiatives*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/neighborhood-safety-initiatives/more-info>

- **Invest in Residents:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives hires, trains, and supports community organizers; recruits and organizes resident leadership teams; designs and implements social programs; manages community action plans; and implements data collection and evaluations. Social programs include youth mentorship, coding courses, music mentorship, adult entrepreneurship training and support, intergenerational green space stewardship, healing and justice events, public education campaigns like those around COVID-19, summer time basketball series, economic mobility events, and more. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives also respond to residents' immediate needs. The program coordinates collaboration across city agencies and other non-profit partners to answer food needs, connect residents to resources, and host conflict resolution events. In 2024, over 400 intergenerational residents were actively involved in resident stakeholder teams, taking the lead in identifying both the issues plaguing their communities and driving positive change.
- **Transform Public Spaces:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives works with residents to re-envision public spaces to make them more welcoming and promote people's well-being. In the last five years the program has designed and implemented a series of community gardens and recreational public spaces, wayfinding projects, murals, creative lighting installations, and a pop-up outdoor program with movable kiosks where partner agencies can provide information and supportive services to the community. Since 2017, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives has overseen the co-creation and implementation of over 65 built environment projects and social programs. These initiatives include murals, open plazas, community gardens, pop-up modular resource hubs, music programs for youth, and adult entrepreneurship programs in collaboration with NYCHA community stakeholders.

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.)

The Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) program is offered out of both Neighbors in Action and the Bronx Community Justice Center.

S.O.S. is a replication of the Cure Violence model, which employs a public health approach to prevent gun violence, partnering with local organizations, faith leaders, residents, and the individuals most likely to be involved in a shooting. Our staff prevent gun violence from occurring by mediating conflicts and acting as peer counselors to people who are at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. We work closely with neighborhood leaders and businesses to promote a visible and public message against gun violence, encouraging local voices to articulate that gun violence is unacceptable. These local voices are respected pillars of the community, adults that youth and their families know and trust.

Using public health strategies, S.O.S. seeks to prevent the spread of violence. Its key elements are:

- **Community Outreach and Hospital Response:** The program deploys outreach workers and violence interrupters who engage youth and adults in the community at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. The staff, who all have intimate knowledge of life on the streets, serve as counselors, offering advice and guidance on how to respond to conflicts without violence. They use positive peer pressure to redirect high-risk individuals towards school or jobs and help them think and behave differently about

violence. Violence interrupters' primary focus is to prevent shootings from occurring by engaging in mediation. Hospital responders partner with local hospitals to respond to shooting injuries, connecting with gunshot-wound victims and their families at the hospital to offer resources and prevent retaliation.

- **Public Education:** S.O.S. staff and volunteers distribute palm cards and posters with messages that promote peaceful conflict resolution, decry violence, and offer S.O.S. as a safe resource for people at risk of experiencing gun violence. Merchants have signs in their windows to support our "Stop Shooting. Start Living," message and count the number of days since the last shooting. Social media, texting, and e-mails keep the community updated and involved. S.O.S. campaigns are often designed particularly to reach youth with a specific, thought-provoking focus.
- **Faith-Based Leaders:** Faith-based organizations are an essential partner in the S.O.S. violence-reduction strategy. Faith-based leaders are encouraged to preach against gun violence from their pulpits, attend vigils, counsel people who are potentially involved in gun violence, and refer high-risk individuals to the program.
- **Community Mobilization:** S.O.S. has built strong relationships with local businesses and agencies to spread an anti-violence message and promote community collaboration. Staff, participants, and volunteers organize block parties, arts showcases, presentations, and trainings to advance the idea that gun violence is both unacceptable and preventable. The program organizes community forums, rallies and marches, speak-outs, and barbecues to advance a simple idea: our community is moving past gun violence. S.O.S. also organizes a rally or vigil in the location of every shooting to call attention to and denounce the tragic results of violence. Local residents work as canvassers to promote events and disseminate program information.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Now more than ever, the Center is looking to our partners in the City Council to sustain and further support this vital work. Creating safer, more equitable communities requires continued dedication from the network of non-profit organizations, government partners and neighborhoods that are home to this work. We look forward to expanding the footprint of Community Justice across the city, and continuing the progress of decades past.

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Proposal Summaries

Major Cross-Site Proposals

- **#197482 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

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

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

- **#194898 - Driver Accountability Program - \$885,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

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

- **193911 - Bronx Project Reset - \$710,000**

Diversion Programs (Renewal)

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

- **#197405 - Manhattan Rapid Reset - \$280,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) is seeking support for Rapid Reset, an expansion of the Citywide pre-arraignment diversion program, Project Reset, in Manhattan. In partnership with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the Center's Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC) launched Rapid Reset in late 2023 to provide an opportunity for pre-arraignment diversion to all eligible individuals who appear for court. Like the decade-old Project Reset, Rapid Reset offers people one session of programming, connections to voluntary services, and a chance to receive a "decline to prosecute" from the District Attorney's Office, in lieu of a court appearance. MCJC offers Rapid Reset at all Desk Appearance Ticket (DAT) arraignment parts at 100 Centre Street and at MCJC.

- **#194075 - Felony Alternatives to Incarceration - \$1,385,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks continued and expanded funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programming for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. This programming offers holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions. The enhanced funding would target two areas of particular need: housing support and peer support. Specifically, the additional funds requested would support the hiring of two additional staff members: a Housing Case Manager, and a Peer Mental Health Specialist. These two

staff members would significantly enhance the capacity of the Felony ATI Programs to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our growing population; and ultimately, improving outcomes for participants and society.

- **#194130 - EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants - \$300,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

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

- **#193978 - Bronx Project Heal - \$52,935**

Support for Victims of Human Trafficking (Renewal)

Description: This application is for Bronx Project HEAL (Helping to Empower through Advocacy and Leadership), an evolution of the Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) initiative. Based on the National Project HEAL curriculum, developed by the Center for Justice Innovation, Bronx Project HEAL is a leadership development and peer support initiative for justice-involved gender-based violence and human trafficking survivors that is informed by, co-created with, and often co-led by, survivors themselves. It is a 3- to 4-month voluntary program that aims to enhance the capacity of survivors to become leaders and advocates in the Bronx community by offering community-based professional development experiences, leadership and advocacy opportunities, and mentorship and peer support. Funding will support the implementation of the survivor leader empowerment program aimed at providing professional development services, including leadership and advocacy training, to survivor leaders to enhance their professional skills and encourage their participation in anti-trafficking policy and advocacy efforts.

- **#195412 - Pro Se Pilot Program - \$188,917**

Information and Referral Services; Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (New)

This application seeks to expand an ongoing pilot program to provide holistic case management and legal navigation services for pro se litigants in civil court (i.e.,

individuals who are representing themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney). Currently housed in Judge Anne Swern's Kings County Civil Supreme Courtroom, the Pro Se Support Program connects unrepresented litigants with a case manager/social worker who works to address the underlying needs which bring these litigants to court. Judge Swern brought this idea to the Center for Justice Innovation as a response to the types of cases pro se litigants in her court were bringing, noticing that almost always an underlying resource gap was the true source of the issue before the court, and that a legal resolution often failed to address these underlying issues. By providing case management and legal navigation services to unrepresented litigants, The Pro Se Support Program seeks to increase civil access to justice for indigent, marginalized populations, prevent mental health crises and criminal offending upstream, and save the court time and resources.

- **#194222 - Strong Starts Court Initiative - \$100,000**

Children Under Five (New)

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

Bronx Community Justice Center

- **#192488 - Bronx Community Justice Center Insight Initiatives - \$100,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center (Justice Center), an operating project of the Center for Justice Innovation, seeks Court Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative funding to enhance the Insight Initiatives program (Insight). Insight is a diversion and alternative-to-incarceration program for young people ages 14 to 24. Insight is specifically designed to engage youth who have been impacted by violence and/or gang involvement. Insight is a community-based, localized program model that is strongly rooted in the neighborhoods the program serves and where youth live. Insight leverages community engagement as the foundation of its successful approach. Insight uses a transformative, healing-centered model to allow youth to take accountability for their actions, contribute to their communities, and address root causes to prevent future justice involvement. Many of the participants, who are justice-involved youth, have also experienced harm and trauma which oftentimes leads to substance misuse as a coping

mechanism. As such, with support from City Council funding, the Justice Center hopes to expand Insight to also provide support for justice system-involved youth struggling with substance misuse.

- **#192552 - Bronx Community Justice Center In-She-Spire - \$100,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center's Project In-She-Spire works to create a safe, empowering, and nurturing environment designed to address the unique needs of young women, femmes, and gender-expansive individuals between the ages of 14 and 24. In the South Bronx, girls encounter a distinct set of challenges, resulting in fractured community bonds, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and involvement in gangs. Project In-She-Spire is dedicated to fostering meaningful social connections among these young women and gender-expansive youth, with the aim of fostering positive development, strengthening resilience, and boosting self-esteem. Project In-She-Spire's goal is to provide participants with the vital skills and resources needed to navigate systemic obstacles and overcome adversity, ultimately building a brighter future.

Bronx Community Solutions

- **#197361 - Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated Program - \$100,000**

Member Item; Bronx Delegation (New)

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

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

- **#192513 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court Court-Involved Youth Mental Health - \$150,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of Brooklyn Mental Health Court provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of the cases we serve. Since 2017, more than 191 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court. Thanks to City Council support, we hired a new dedicated Youth Engagement Social worker who leads youth programming and fosters close relationships with our participants. Renewed funding will enable us to continue and strengthen our youth-focused programs, provide meaningful activities and healthy meals and snacks to our participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain our critical Youth Engagement Social Worker.

- **#192478 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court - \$100,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York City, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) is a specialized court that seeks to craft meaningful responses to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community, BMHC links defendants with serious and persistent mental illnesses or neurodevelopmental disorders (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, with long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. BMHC performs psychosocial assessments and psychiatric evaluations, comes up with treatment plans, monitors clients' adherence to treatment plans, and refers clients to community-based services. For FY26, BMHC is seeking renewal funding to enhance its support of some the City's most vulnerable residents.

Brownsville Community Justice Center

- **#192523 - Brownsville Community Justice Center Brownsville Girls Collaborative - \$150,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (Renewal)

Description: The Brownsville Girls Collaborative (BGC), a cornerstone of programming at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is a leadership development program focused on the holistic empowerment of young women in the community. The program creates a safe space for young women from Brownsville, who are at high risk of violence or justice involvement, to engage with Justice Center staff, facilitators, and one another.

Throughout the year, the Justice Center will work with BGC participants to address the root causes of trauma, violence, and risk behaviors to reduce justice system contact and develop participants into positive actors within the Brownsville community.

Queens Community Justice Center

- **#190772 - Queens Community Justice Center UPLIFT - \$100,000**

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

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

The RISE Project

- **#191278 - RISE Project IPV Community Intervention - \$150,000**

Domestic Violence and Empowerment (Renewal/Expansion)

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

Staten Island Community Justice Center

- **#195496 - Staten Island Community Justice Center - \$200,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY23, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten Island residents. Continued City Council support in FY24 and FY25 enabled the Staten Island Justice Center to use the results of the survey to inform the Community Justice Center planning process, as well as develop, pilot, and implement several new initiatives responsive to identified community needs. The Staten Island Justice Center respectfully seeks continued funding for FY26 to support this ongoing work, and, particularly, to sustain full implementation of the piloted initiatives, including youth and placemaking programs.

- **#192670 - Staten Island Community Justice Center Youth Wellness Initiative - \$130,000**

Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: This a renewal proposal for Staten Island Justice Center's Youth Wellness Initiative (YWI), a program providing wrap-around services to court-involved and justice system-impacted youth in Staten Island, ages 12 to 18, to decrease the likelihood of long-term justice involvement and support those who may have unmet mental health needs. We specifically seek to engage youth who have participated in some form of community harm (such as assault, robbery, or gang violence) or who have experienced community harm such as community violence or violence at home. YWI works to decrease community harm and the likelihood of long-term justice involvement through transformative education, youth-led community engagement, peer support and mentorship, and individual short-term counseling and advocacy. YWI also offers interactive and holistic family resources and support to parents or guardians who may need assistance in caring for their youth while navigating the justice system. Participants will be able to translate their therapeutic encounters into an opportunity to restore themselves back into their communities.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BRONX COUNTY

March 6, 2025

Speaker Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, I am pleased to write this letter in support of key Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, Center for Court Innovation) FY25 City Council Applications. Funding will expand:

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

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

For the past several years, the City Council has supported the Bronx with **\$710,000** to invest in early system diversion, which includes Project Reset, the Center's citywide pre-arraignment diversion model and same day at arraignments programming that re-directs New Yorkers with misdemeanor arrests from the court system. Project Reset Bronx includes borough-wide restorative justice circles to aid in diversion. This has offered relief from the collateral consequence's participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for low-level crimes. We support the Center's continuing to partner with the Council to implement the next generation of early system diversions for the Bronx to continue to lead the City in scaled restorative justice-based interventions.

The Bronx County District Attorney's Office partners with the **Bronx Child Trauma Support** program to support clinical assessment and treatment of child victims and witnesses to crimes in the Bronx. The continued support of the Council will baseline these direct services conducted through evidenced-based and trauma-informed intervention models designed to prevent or reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, suicidality, re-traumatization, and future victimization.

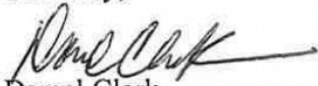
Thanks to meaningful changes in the treatment of trafficking victims in the justice system, the Center's Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) referrals continue to decline. **Project Healing and Empowerment through Advocacy and Leadership** (Project HEAL) is a survivor leadership and peer support initiative for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, we support the Center's RISE Project which is used in Family Court and provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence.

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

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

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

Sincerely,



Darcel Clark



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY
MICHAEL E. McMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

February 28, 2025

Honorable Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Center for Justice Innovation Fiscal Year 2026 Initiatives

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

I am pleased to offer my support to the Center for Justice Innovation's application to expand alternatives to incarceration opportunities and to provide mental health support, early diversion programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, restorative re-entry options for individuals and their families, pre-court eviction prevention options, and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities across the city. Many of these important initiatives and programs will advance Staten Island towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system and build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

CJI's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Staten Island to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. My office has proudly partnered with CJI in the development of a **Staten Island Community Justice Center** to reduce crime and incarceration, strengthen community trust in justice, and create safer, more equitable neighborhoods through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. To maintain existing operations and plan for new programming, existing Justice Center staff will dedicate time to the development of new initiatives and activities including data collection and evaluation plans. Together, we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports through innovative courts and alternatives to incarceration programming and services. I strongly encourage

investment in each of the programs and areas outlined above to ensure that they can continue this successful work.

I further urge the Council to support **Youth Impact Staten Island**. The Youth Impact program (formerly Youth Court) is a multi-pronged youth leadership development program focused on peer-led mentorship and violence intervention and prevention practices, with a goal to keep young people in school and out of the criminal legal system, while inspiring community safety and healing from a youth-centered perspective. The program primarily uses a restorative justice model through structured in-school violence intervention partnerships and organized civic engagement. Participants develop hard skills including in oral and written communication, facilitation, conflict resolution and research processes; learn the impact and infrastructure of the justice system; and are trained in community planning and organizing.

Individuals demonstrating persistent and untreated mental illness require access to culturally competent mental health treatment. To address gaps in mental health-related support for court-involved youth in Staten Island, I urge the Council to continue and expand support for the Staten Island Justice Center's **Youth Wellness Initiative**. This initiative provides vital mental health services that address trauma and promote healing for young people on Staten Island involved in the justice system or at-risk of justice system involvement. Additionally, the initiative is geared towards providing holistic support to families by supporting the parents and caretakers of youth enrolled in the initiative.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation and expansion of the Center's **Driver Accountability Program** to provide a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving and work to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process.

I also urge the Council to continue supporting **CJI's RISE Project**, which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, changing community norms to reduce the tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

The Council should continue and expand support for **CJI's Innovative Core Funding**. CJI uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Staten Island residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, providing victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this letter as you make important financial determinations on behalf of the City of New York.

If you have questions, please contact Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Grants Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Sloan, via telephone at (718) 556-7089 or via email at Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael E. McMahon
District Attorney

MEM/aem



**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 11, 2025**

Chair Salaam and Committee Members:

Since 1995, Children's Rights has been a national advocate for youth in state systems. We are also a member of the New York City Jails Action Coalition. Our experience with adolescents and young adults in foster care and juvenile legal systems often brings us into contact with young adult and youth corrections policy, as our clients are disproportionately represented in young adult and juvenile correction facilities. We advocate on behalf of young adults, 18- to 21-years old, incarcerated on Rikers Island.

We cannot incarcerate our way to public safety. We must invest in our communities, not continue to throw money at the humanitarian disaster that is Rikers Island. We urge this Committee and the Council to cut the Department of Correction budget and redistribute funding to programs that actually work to improve public safety. We also urge you to reverse the cuts to the Board of Correction to provide the resources for meaningful oversight of the City's jails.

New York City operates both the most excessively-funded and over-staffed jail system in the country—with the worst results. The City now spends over \$500,000 per incarcerated person per year.¹ It runs the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has more officers than people in custody.² Despite the enormous sums poured into the City's jails, however, countless reports show that detainees are subjected to some of the most dangerous, degrading, and inhumane conditions in the country. We need look no further than the *Nunez* monitor's regular reports and the February 28, 2024 report filed in *Benjamin v. Molina* detailing vermin infestation and sanitary violations on Rikers.³ Serving time on Rikers can also be a death sentence: since

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/ensuring-timely-trials/>. The most recent available data show that more than 78% of incarcerated persons on Rikers are there pre-trial, more than half have mental health conditions, and over 84% are people of color. <https://greaterjusticenyc.vera.org/nycjail/> Hundreds of people languish on Rikers every day simply because they are homeless. <https://nysfocus.com/2022/01/03/he-was-homeless-so-the-judge-kept-him-at-rikers/>.

² DOC Fact Sheet: Staffing and Efforts to Improve Conditions; <https://vera-institute.files.svcdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/a-look-inside-the-new-york-city-correction-budget.pdf>.

³ <https://tillidgroup.com/projects/nunez-monitorship/>; <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-rikers-island-report-reveals-graphic-details-about-unsanitary-conditions-fire-safety-and-ventilation-systems/>; <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2024/01/11/detainees-request-clean-laundry-report-unsanitary-conditions-on-rikers#:~:text=%22They%20don%27t%20have%20soap,%2C%20to%20wash%20their%20clothes.%22;see%20also%20https://centerforjustice.columbia.edu/news/new-report-solitary-many-other-names-report-persistent-and-pervasive-use-solitary-confinement>.

Mayor Adams took office, 35 incarcerated people have lost their lives while in Department custody.⁴

Children's Rights urges you to include in the Council's priorities the following:

- At least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs, and to fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including the following funding for specific programs:
 - \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH), and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - \$22 million more to create 15 more Intensive Mobile Treatment teams. The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - \$7 million more to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams and cut the long wait times (average of six to 12 months) to access this service.
 - \$6 million more to open four new crisis respite centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- Full restoration of cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) (\$3.8 million) and re-entry (\$8 million) programs. The budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for ATIs by \$2.4 million to support the scaling of ATIs citywide.
- Full restoration of cuts to the Board of Correction and increase its headcount to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.⁵ The preliminary budget proposes \$210,000 in cuts and five fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight, not less, of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed.
 - Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.

If the City eliminated the more than 1,100 current vacant positions for uniformed correction officers, New York City could save almost \$150 million next year *alone* to reinvest in the programs and services listed above—programs that create real community safety and well-being.⁶

Finally, the investments we recommend will help the City close Rikers by August 31, 2027 in accordance with the law. We call on the Council to ensure our communities have adequate supportive and affordable housing, mental health care, and other critical services *before* New Yorkers interact with the criminal legal system. This is especially critical for our children and

⁴ <https://www.vera.org/news/nyc-jail-deaths>; the most recent person to die in DOC custody was Terrence Moore on February 24, 2025.

⁵ The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6 million to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute less than 1% of the current jail population (6,800 people).

⁶ <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/a-look-inside-the-new-york-city-correction-budget.pdf>.

youth. Evidence shows that incarceration reduces youth's success in education and employment, and also leads to lasting damage to their health and well-being.⁷ Evidence also shows that alternatives to incarceration lead to better outcomes for youth and adolescents, all while costing far less than incarceration.⁸ Underfunding alternatives to confinement and re-entry services makes no sense morally, ethically, or fiscally.

Negotiating these essential changes to the proposed budget provides an opportunity for the Council to move the City in the right direction, while also rightsizing the expenditure of taxpayer dollars. Instead of allocating \$2.87 billion to the Department of Correction as the Mayor has proposed,⁹ the Council should negotiate a fair, just, and reasonable budget that serves all New Yorkers, including young adults and adults on Rikers, and expedites closure of the Island.

Especially in the face of the federal government's rampage against the most vulnerable among us, we look to the City Council to do right by all New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniele Gerard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniele Gerard
Senior Staff Attorney
dgerard@childrensrights.org

⁷ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/why-youth-incarceration-fails-an-updated-review-of-the-evidence/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>.

**Testimony of Caitlyn Passaretti, Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to the New York City Council FY'2025 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Public Safety Committee
March 10th, 2025**

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

We would like to thank Chair Salam and all the members of the City Council Committee on Public Safety for holding today's important hearing on the FY26 Preliminary Budget, and how to improve the delivery of essential services and programs for NYC youth and young adults to build sustainable public safety practices.

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

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

Despite the well-established benefits of these programs, since 2023 the City Administration has cut nearly \$6 million from probation programs that have proven to be successful in supporting re-entry and connecting young people to mentorship and services. Failing to provide robust reentry services or supportive probation programs will harm our youth and is counterintuitive to building safe communities.

We therefore recommend the following restorations in the FY26 Budget:

- Restore and baseline the \$3.8 million cut to the Office of Criminal Justice for Alternative to Incarceration programs
- Restore and baseline \$8 million for reentry programs

State Advocacy: Waiver of Hardship for Raise the Age

Last fall marked six years since Raise the Age was first implemented across New York State, ending a shameful chapter in our history of prosecuting 16- and 17-year olds as adults regardless of the offense. Prior to the passage of this legislation, thousands of 16- and 17-year-olds were held in dangerous conditions on Rikers Island and other adult jails across the state. Moreover, these youth were systematically locked out of age-appropriate services in family court programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents and avoid the barriers of an adult criminal record.

Youth crime has consistently decreased since Raise the Age implementation in 2018. In New York City alone, since 2013 there has been a 48% decrease in adolescent arrests for serious offenses.¹ Evidence from implementation across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being.

Despite making up half of the state's youth justice system population, New York City is currently excluded from accessing the Raise the Age funding because the City exceeds the tax cap prescribed by state law. However, it is possible to access this funding by submitting a waiver of hardship, indicating that our city and our programs need the resources that are available through the Raise the Age law. New York City accounts for half of the state's youth justice system population and should be able to access more funding. However, Mayor Adams has yet to apply for the waiver of hardship, despite the administration's claim that the current fiscal cliff necessitates drastic cuts to many of the supportive services and programs that are vital to New York City's youth and families.

It is critical to invest in programs and organizations that are serving our communities through youth development, violence-prevention services, and other alternatives to incarceration to prevent the necessity of further investment in the carceral system. **We therefore urge the Council to work with the Mayor and the administration to submit a letter with the waiver of hardship to allow NYC to be considered for the funding. The ability to access RTA funding for community investments would be transformative for youth and communities in New York City.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

¹ In NYC, there was a decline of 77% in total arrests, and a decline of 48% in Index Crimes for youth under the age of 18. Data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services: Juvenile Arrests (Non-NYC) 2013-2022; Analysis of New York City Police Department data by Citizens Committee for Children of New York for 2013-2022. On file with the author.



Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Testimony

March 12, 2025

Dear Chair Yusef Salaam and Members of NYC Committee on Public Safety:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the NYC budget for 2025.

I am Cassandra Warney from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national nonprofit that works to reduce homelessness by helping communities provide permanently affordable housing and wraparound services. Supportive housing is for people who, without services, would not be able to stay housed.

My testimony today is focused on people in NYC who have significant behavioral health needs and are often cycling between jails, shelters, street homelessness, and emergency rooms. **We are asking the City to invest in our housing providers to help reduce crisis system use and strengthen our communities.**

The solution to our City's housing and mental health crisis is to appropriately fund housing providers, so these organizations have the right workforce, can retain their staff, secure apartments for clients in a competitive market, and be able to expand their programs. **The current funding levels and supportive housing eligibility criteria's are not adequate nor respond to the evolving needs on the ground.**

We respectfully ask that City Council urges Mayor Adams to invest in the housing and services needs of the most at-risk New Yorkers and takes steps forward on the [City's commitment to Close Rikers](#) by:

- 1. Allocating \$4.8 million to ensure the JISH units are fully operational and make JISH funding its own line-item in the DOHMH budget.**

Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.

- 2. Expand access to supportive housing for justice-involved people by passing Intro 1100.**

Background

NYC 15/15, the City's primary supportive housing program, aims to create 15,000 units over 15 years for individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Despite being City-funded, the program follows federal chronic homelessness criteria, requiring 12+ months of homelessness and disqualifying those incarcerated for 90+ days by resetting their homelessness status. These barriers exclude thousands of individuals exiting Rikers and other carceral settings, preventing access to stable housing and undermining the program's



Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Testimony

March 12, 2025

mission. Expanding eligibility is crucial to ensuring NYC 15/15 serves those who need it most. Additionally, the City's only dedicated supportive housing program for justice-involved individuals, Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH), remains underfunded and incomplete. As part of the Rikers closure plan, the City committed to providing 500 JISH units, yet only 120 are in operation due to insufficient funding for supportive services, leaving NYC 15/15 as the only other viable option for supportive housing.

The Problem

Instead of providing housing upon release, NYC 15/15 -- the City's primary supportive housing program -- forces people into shelters to generate time as homeless to meet chronicity criteria, perpetuating the cycle of homelessness.

- The average stay at Rikers for individuals with serious mental illness is **287 days**—long enough to reset their homelessness status, disqualifying them from NYC 15/15 upon release. This average length of stay does not include those with a substance use disorder, undercounting the actual need.
- **41–54%** of people leaving NYS prisons have entered NYC shelters each year since 2015, further burdening the system.
- **33%** of people admitted to NYC jails in 2023 were unhoused prior to incarceration, demonstrating a clear link between homelessness and jail stays.

The Solution

This bill effectively **eliminates the 90-day incarceration reset rule**, allowing those with longer jail and prison stays to qualify. Intro 1100 expands eligibility for city-funded supportive housing to:

- Individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Those justice-involved in the past 12 months.

Why it Matters

- Expands supportive housing access to at least 2,600 individuals detained on Rikers each year, preventing long shelter stays and street homelessness upon release.
- **Saves Money:** Supportive housing for 2,600 people costs ~\$108M/year, vs. \$1.4B for incarceration—a \$1.2B net savings.
- **Immediate Budget Impact:** NYC can save \$150M in FY26 by cutting vacant Dept. of Correction positions and can reinvest a portion of those resources in supportive housing.

NYC's leadership commitment to closing the jails on Rikers island by 2027 takes steadfast and consistent investment in community-based organizations. More than 50% of people currently detained on Rikers island have a mental health diagnosis, and hundreds of people languish on Rikers every day simply because they are homeless. Investments in adequate housing and services allow our City to have proactive resources before people interact with the criminal legal system.

Respectfully,

Cassandra Warney
Senior Program Manager, CSH
Cassandra.warney@csh.org



Testimony of:

The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services and Queens Defenders

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Public Safety

Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 11, 2025

This testimony is submitted jointly by The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders. As New York City’s public defenders, we serve hundreds of thousands of low-income people, overwhelmingly Black and brown New Yorkers, each year.

For years, we have testified about chronic underfunding that hinders our ability to retain experienced, dedicated staff and meet essential operational needs. While the state has recently provided funding for discovery-related costs, the city’s failure to issue a required Request for Proposal (RFP) has left our offices without the increased funding necessary to meet rising costs. Instead, we remain in a Negotiated Acquisition Extension (NAE) process that fails to provide adequate resources, resulting in severe funding gaps and dire consequences for our ability to serve New Yorkers.

For FY26, we urge the city to take immediate action and provide:

1. A **25% increase in personnel budgets** to ensure competitive salaries that reflect the value of our staff’s work.
2. A **10% increase in health insurance** costs.
3. A **10% increase in occupancy and OTPS** expenses have risen for years without corresponding funding.
4. An additional **\$15 million** to adequately fund our homicide representation services.

The Essential Role of Public Defenders

Public defenders are a critical component of our criminal legal system, often the only barrier to conviction of innocent people and ensuring fairness and justice in the legal system. People facing unfair and harsh outcomes that can arise from even minor allegations, such as deportation, loss of housing, suspension from school, eviction from housing and loss of employment, count on

their public defender to avoid these harms or at least be advised of them before they plead guilty or go to trial.

By providing additional services to our clients, we are also an asset to an often-underserved community in the city. There are times that without the public defender office, a low-income person would not have access to resources that we provide, such as social work, immigration defense and many other forms of legal representation.

Recruitment and Retention Crisis

Public defenders in New York City earn significantly less than their counterparts in other jurisdictions with similar living costs. They also make less than other attorneys working in similar jobs in the New York City legal system, such as Corporation Counsel. Many staff have taken second jobs, endure crippling debt, or even face housing insecurity. This financial instability leads to burnout and high attrition rates.

While our attorneys and advocates choose this work out of dedication to justice, they deserve salaries that reflect the essential nature of their roles. The pay gap is stark: 18B panel attorneys earn \$158/hour, while our attorneys average only \$60/hour, assuming a 35-hour work week (which most far exceed). Federal Defender Offices in New York routinely recruit our staff by offering significantly higher salaries. Our counterparts in NYC Federal Defender Offices' starting salary is \$105K and doubles over the course of 10 years. The wages we can provide to our staff with current budgets is 25% less at the bottom of the pay scale and about 50% less than the top pay, but the representation, experience, and dedication are the same.

New York City public defenders provide far more than legal representation in court—they advocate for the full spectrum of their client's needs, addressing underlying issues such as housing instability, employment barriers, and access to social services. By integrating attorneys, social workers, advocates, and investigators into defense teams, we ensure that clients receive comprehensive support that stabilizes their lives beyond the courtroom, often in ways that are inaccessible to them through traditional community-based resources.

Flat Funding and Rising Costs

For years, our offices have been forced to absorb rising costs for healthcare, utilities, and office space without additional funding. Some offices have reduced space and implemented hoteling strategies to save on rent. Others have had to cut healthcare benefits—vital for staff well-being, particularly given the mental and emotional toll of our work.

City agencies and District Attorneys automatically receive cost-of-living increases, yet public defenders must negotiate for every dollar to cover salary increases and basic expenses. The lack of consistent funding for salary adjustments, fringe benefits, and operational costs prevents us from offering opportunities for growth and promotion, making retention even more challenging. Our interdisciplinary teams, including social workers, paralegals, and administrators, are stretched thin due to increasing discovery demands, further straining our resources.

Homicide Representation: A Growing Crisis

Our offices secured homicide contracts in 2019 after extensive negotiations with the city, but funding was inadequate from the start. Homicide rates went up after 2019 and while they seem to be lower now, the pending caseload is much larger than the initial funding in 2019 expected. Failing to adjust funding for this reality has placed immense pressure on our homicide defense teams. To bring caseloads down to a manageable load and allow our staff to move forward on the multiple trials that are finally happening we require an additional **\$15 million**. This funding would allow us to hire more attorneys and essential support staff, including investigators, social workers, and mitigation specialists, to sustain the high standard of legal representation our clients deserve.

Our homicide defense teams have played a critical role in preventing wrongful convictions, providing robust investigations, and ensuring every defendant receives due process. With the right resources, we can continue to set the national standard for excellence in criminal defense representation.

Conclusion

New York City's public defense organizations are essential to ensuring fairness and justice for all residents, regardless of income. However, without immediate funding increases, we will continue to lose experienced attorneys, struggle with rising costs, and fail to meet the growing demands of our work.

We urge the city to:

- Provide a **25% increase in personnel budgets** to ensure competitive wages.
- Fund **increases in healthcare, occupancy, and OTPS costs** to reflect rising expenses.
- Allocate **\$15 million for homicide representation** to address escalating caseloads.

Failing to invest in public defense undermines the integrity of our justice system and jeopardizes the rights of the people we serve and the communities of New York City. We ask the Council to act now to support the defenders who fight daily to uphold justice for New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your support in the FY26 budget.



Family Legal Care's Testimony to the New York City Council's Committee on Public Safety

Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Council Chambers, City Hall
Yusef Salaam, Chairperson

My name is Cathy Cramer and I am the Chief Executive Officer at Family Legal Care, formerly LIFT. Thank you to Chairperson Salaam and members of the Committee on Public Safety for the opportunity to testify about the issues families with cases in New York Family Court are facing.

On behalf of Family Legal Care, I'd like to thank Chairperson Salaam and the New York City Council for its continued support and focus on issues impacting New York's parents and caregivers in Family Court. Without funding from the New York City Council we could not do our vital work to assist families confronting issues at the heart of their well-being, including **child support, custody and visitation, parentage/paternity and domestic violence**. If families are provided upstream support and services to address these issues in an efficient and careful way, we can help prevent future problems for children and families. This is especially important now, as rising uncertainty about the economy, immigration, and the programs and services that New Yorkers rely on will lead to considerable strain on families and increased public safety concerns.

We urge the Council to increase discretionary funding allocations for Family Legal Care in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure we can continue to help the thousands of parents and caregivers who rely on us to create stability, security, and emotional well-being.

Family Legal Care's mission is to increase access to justice in New York State Family Court. We combine legal guidance, easy-to-access technology, and compassionate support to help unrepresented parents and caregivers self-advocate on critical family law issues, while working on reform that improves the system for everyone.

We are the only organization in New York State dedicated solely to empowering parents and caregivers to represent themselves in New York Family Court. Each year we help over 28,000 parents and caregivers to self-advocate for positive outcomes in Family Court. The demand for free, expert legal advice has never been greater, continues to grow, and Family Legal Care is the only organization in New York City filling this need.

The New York City Family Courts have been under-resourced and overburdened for decades, and 80% of litigants come to Family Court without a lawyer. These unrepresented litigants are disproportionately low-income, from communities of color, often undocumented immigrants, or speak monolingual Spanish or some other language. Because the family courts are understaffed, there is a justice gap for many of the litigants. Organizations like Family Legal Care and others have worked closely with the Court to close this justice gap, but serious issues remain. The underinvestment in the family courts, and particularly the failure to prioritize child support cases, has significant effects for families in NYC. **Investing in organizations like Family Legal Care to help parents address their child support concerns will increase**

financial stability of NYC families and have upstream effects on the public safety of our city.

As of 2021, 1 in 6 children in NYC live in a household receiving child support¹. Child support is a literal lifeline for many of the most impoverished families in NYC, but it is not uncommon for custodial parents to receive none of the money they are entitled to. Many parents turn to the Family Court for help: 1 in 3 cases in New York Family Court deals with child support, but the Courts do not give child support cases the weight they are due. Litigants do not have a right to attorney unless for imprisonment over nonpayment but the pro se litigants are held to the same standards as lawyers and are expected to offer evidence, cross examine witnesses, and understand other court procedures, like service. Pro se litigants, a disproportionate number of whom self-identify as people of color, are navigating the complex Court and legal systems completely on their own, and the stakes for their families are high. Child support is not just about money – it is about housing, healthcare, and food on the table.

Family Legal Care helps by

- Offering legal advice and consultations from staff attorneys with expert knowledge on family law topics.
- Providing critical legal information to pro se litigants via our bilingual phone, email, and live chat Helplines or in-person at the city's family courts.
- Regularly conducting legal education workshops, presentations, and webinars on common family law issues.
- Developing over 60 multilingual legal information materials on child support and other family law issues, which are available online and in each of the city's borough courthouses.
- Connecting unrepresented litigants with pro bono attorneys for video consultations through our Pro Bono Program.
- Developing innovative digital tools that make legal information and court documents easy to access, understand, and be completed on a mobile device.
- Connecting those impacted by the digital divide in our Brooklyn, Queens and Bronx Legal Information and Tech Hubs to the equipment and stable internet connection they need to access the hybrid courts.

The communities with the fewest resources, a disproportionate number of whom identify as people of color, are bearing the brunt of the Court's systemic failures. The Court's decisions touch the lives of thousands of children and families with profound, long-lasting effects on their safety, economic security, health, and well-being.

Strong families are essential building blocks for a thriving city, and we believe we have a powerful upstream impact in this unique space through Family Court. Family Legal Care helps families self-advocate for the financial resources to which they are entitled, that will help them to care for their children, and remain in their homes and communities. With increased support from the City Council, Family Legal Care can continue to be part of the solution.

Thank you.

¹ New York City Human Resources Administration Office of Child Support Services. August 2021.

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Public Safety**Submitted March 11, 2025 by Darren Mack**

Thank you Chair Salaam and Council members, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Darren Mack, and I am Co-Director of Freedom Agenda, and we're one of the organizations leading the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#).

Our members have both experienced Rikers and been impacted by crime, and they know what works to create real public safety. It's things like housing, healthcare, work opportunities, mentorship, and safe community spaces. While Mayor Adams' has said he wants to "close the pipelines that feed Rikers," his proposed budget would do the opposite. The Mayor's budget proposes \$11.8M in cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice for alternative to incarceration and reentry programs, while allocating \$150M to hire 1,100 more correction officers.

The Mayor's proposed cuts to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs are clearly not an economic necessity. If our City were truly facing budget constraints, the Mayor would not plan to spend nearly \$150 million to hire 1,100 more correction officers this year, when DOC already has about [four times more officers](#) per person in custody than the average US jail system. The proposed cuts also ignore the wishes of crime survivors - [a recent survey](#) of crime survivors in New York City showed that 3 of 4 prefer alternatives to incarceration and mental health treatment instead of jail. The proposed cuts are also not in-line with evidence-based practices, given the [documented successes](#) of ATI and reentry programs, compared with [research](#) that shows that people detained at Rikers are more likely to be rearrested than those who were not.

So why would the Mayor propose a budget like this? It could be lack of vision, or it could be a giveaway to a corrupt union that has supported him, but it isn't for the benefit of New Yorkers.

The plan to close Rikers Island approved by this Council in 2019 marked a commitment to take a more effective approach to public safety. That shift requires spending our money differently. DOC recently added beds to already-crowded dorms at Rikers Island out of concern they would exceed capacity. What if the City treated preventive investments with the same urgency? What if they took emergency action to ensure that anyone who needs a supportive housing unit or a placement with a mental health treatment team could get one immediately. They may use the language of "recidivism" and "repeat offenders" to stoke fear, but we should all understand the truth - administration is choosing to budget for more harm and incarceration instead of making the investments that could prevent it.

We're calling on the City Council to ensure that the adopted budget paves the way for New York City to deliver on the legal and moral obligation to close Rikers Island, including restoring and increasing funds for ATI and reentry programs. We will submit along with this testimony a [full budget analysis](#) that outlines the amendments needed in the FY26 budget to pave the way to closing Rikers and passing a People's Budget.

Thank you for your partnership.

Darren Mack

Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

Dmack@urbanjustice.org

[attached – FY2026 Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Analysis]



FY2026 Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of over half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety. In addition to exposing people to rampant abuse and violence, Rikers Island wastes resources that are desperately needed for housing, treatment, education, and other investments. It's time to use our precious resources to fund the things that work.

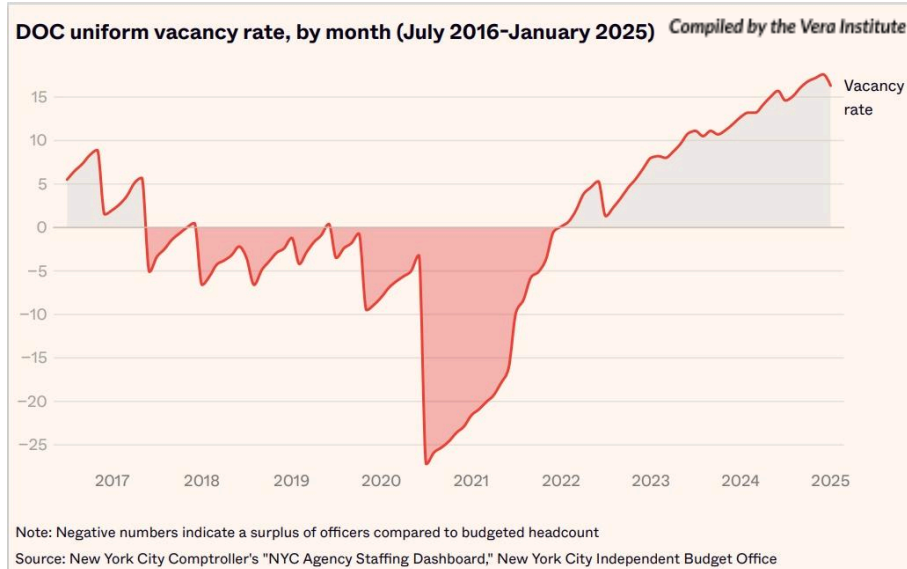
Priorities for this year's budget to advance the closure of Rikers:

- **Allocate at least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs,** and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
 - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate **\$4.8 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#),** and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Allocate \$22M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) teams** and cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
 - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers,** in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- **Fully restore cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice** for ATI (\$3.8M) and reentry (\$8M) programs. The budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) by \$2.4 million to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
- **Fully restore cuts to the Board of Correction and increase their headcount** to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.¹ The [preliminary budget](#) proposes \$210k in cuts and 5 fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed, not less. Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.²
- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.**

¹ Other oversight agencies [like the CCRB](#) have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee.

² The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6M to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute 1% of the currently jail population (6,7000 people)

- The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed [5,908](#) and [1,152 positions were vacant](#).³ DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies (which have been growing since 2022 - see chart below), DOC could realize cost savings of **\$149.6M annually**.⁴



- **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.⁵

Preliminary Budget Analysis

Mayor Adams' proposed budget continues to misappropriate funds that are needed for real public safety investments, by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs, and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration.

DOC's budget is still bloated:

- The Mayor has proposed spending **\$2.87 billion**⁶ on jail operations in FY2026.
- The administration is budgeting for **7,060 uniformed DOC officers through FY2029**.⁷ By that time, New York City is required to close Rikers Island and shift to a borough jails system with **approximately 4,000 beds**. Uniform headcount reductions are consistent with and necessary for a lower jail population and closing Rikers - in fact, these reductions should have started years ago **when the jail population started to decline**.
- DOC is on track to spend roughly \$300 million on overtime for uniform staff in FY25, 136% above **their adopted budget**.

³ Per Independent Budget Office

⁴ Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

⁵ The City of New York. Departmental Estimates. January 2025. p 1368

⁶ Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. ["A Look Inside the NYC FY 2026 Preliminary Budget."](#) Vera Institute of Justice. February 2025.

⁷ Financial Plan of the City of New York. Fiscal Years 2024 - 2028. Full time and full time equivalent staffing levels.

- [An analysis by the New York City Comptroller](#) showed that the **cost of incarcerating a person at a Rikers on an annual basis reached \$507,317** in FY 2023.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by overstaffing. The FY2026 budget projects that [87% of DOC expenses](#) will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.
- **The administration is planning either to continue overusing incarceration or to employ almost twice as many correction officers as people in custody by FY2028.** Either option makes no sense, morally or financially.

Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded:

- In the [Points of Agreement on Closing Rikers](#), the administration agreed to establish 380 more units of [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#), a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings. But funding rates proposed in the RFP issued were so low that [qualified providers have not applied](#), and operators of the existing 120 units have been struggling to provide the quality services they are committed to because of funding rates that were drastically lower than other similar supportive housing programs. In FY2025, the City Council included \$6.4M in their discretionary budget to increase funding rates, but without a commitment from the administration to scale up this investment, these funds could only be applied to increase funding rates for the 120 existing units for 3 years.
- [The Close Rikers Plan](#) also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed with a serious mental illness has [increased by more than 60% since January 2022](#) without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care. Additionally, there are long waiting lists for services like Intensive Mobile Treatment and Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams that create holistic pathways out of the criminal legal system for people with serious mental illness.
- The budget includes increased investments in the Supervised Release Program, which will be beneficial if applied to expand the Intensive Case Management pilot program. The budget also includes increased investments in transitional housing, which must be brought online immediately, must have the lowest possible barriers to entry, and must be paired with an increased investment in permanent housing (like JISH, 15/15 supportive housing, and deeply affordable housing).

Reentry and alternative to incarceration programs face cuts:

- The administration is proposing \$8M in cuts to reentry services, while a key commitment in the [plan to Close Rikers](#) was to "Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails," as [evidence recommends](#).
- The administration is proposing \$3.8 million in cuts to alternative to incarceration programs. Opportunities to divert people from Rikers should be fully utilized, in collaboration with the Jail Population Review Initiative that the Council established last year through Local Law 75-2023. Expanding alternatives to incarceration was also a key commitment in the [plan to close Rikers](#).
- The above programs are funded under the Office of Criminal Justice (formerly MOCJ).

Jail oversight cuts are proposed:

- DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, including [continued illegal use of solitary confinement](#); revelations of [sexual abuse claims on Rikers spanning decades](#); and recent disclosure of [DOC officers "deadlocking" people with severe](#)

[mental health needs](#). Strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 30 positions, and cutting BOC's budget by \\$210,418 \(5%\)](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Department of Correction have a staff shortage?

No. In fact, they are overstaffed. In "[A Shrinking System with Similar Spending](#)," the Independent Budget Office reported that between 2014 and 2023 "DOC staffing declined by 24%, while the jail population fell by 45%." In her [contempt order](#) issued in November 2024, Judge Laura Swain noted that "*enormous resources—that the City devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved—are not being deployed effectively*." Reducing their headcount now is an important first step to [rightsizing](#) the department.

If they are not understaffed, why is there a shortage of officers to cover posts and provide basic services?

Multiple investigations and reports from the Nunez federal monitor have documented widespread mismanagement of DOC's enormous workforce, including officers [failing to fulfill their duties and falsifying tour records](#), [improper assignment of officers to non-jail posts](#) (including over [700 uniformed officers assigned to civilian posts](#)), and likely abuse of medical and personal leave (as reported [in November 2024](#)).

Does DOC need to replace officers who are retiring?

Eliminating vacancies would not prevent DOC from replacing officers who quit, retire, or are terminated. It could push DOC to more effectively supervise and manage their very large staff.

How does NYC's jail spending compare to other cities?

DOC's budgeted headcount of more than one uniformed officer for each incarcerated person is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#). NYC's is the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has nearly as many officers as people in custody.

What will we do about those jobs? Aren't a lot of correction officers people of color, and women?

The choice to invest so much of New York City's budget in incarceration has meant that DOC has become a path to the middle class, including for many women and people of color.⁸ New York City could and should make a different choice - to invest in and raise salaries, for example, for [EMS workers](#), [green jobs](#) that can help us meet our goals for a vibrant and climate resilient city, and [human services jobs](#) that address community needs. Black and Brown workers deserve jobs with good wages and benefits that aren't dependent on the incarceration of their neighbors and families. We must invest in a [just transition](#) to expand and better compensate jobs outside of law enforcement - for example, human services, a sector in which more than 80% of workers are women of color, and which is subject to constant budget cuts that have resulted in lost jobs and depressed wages.

⁸ New York City correction officers are paid \$92,000/year after 5.5 years on the job, and receive generous benefits. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>

TESTIMONY OF DR. MEGAN FRENCH-MARCELIN, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK STATE POLICY AT LEGAL ACTION CENTER

Committee on Public Safety Budget Hearing

March 11, 2025

Thank you to Chairman Salaam and the esteemed members of the committee for this opportunity to testify. My name is Megan French-Marcelin, I am the Senior Director of Policy at the Legal Action Center. Today, I am testifying on behalf of the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition, a network of 12 service organizations with decades of experience in providing holistic, community-based supports to justice-involved New Yorkers. Collectively, our programs serve more than 30,000 New York City residents each year.

In New York City, our dependence on mass criminalization as a means to public safety is at once a manifestation and a driver of systemic inequities that have devastated Black, Latine and working class communities in all five boroughs. And yet, this city is fortunate enough to have an ecosystem of service providers who are doing the back-breaking work of resourcing communities most devastated by these policies..

This ecosystem of providers, who work in front-end Alternatives to Detention/Incarceration as well as back-end reentry services, has been a model nationwide for how you get to a more equitable, human-centered justice system. We are doing this work with pennies on each dollar that the City allocates to the wildly over-resourced Department of Correction, which a federal judge has called “ineffective” in managing those resources.¹

Decades of research demonstrate that ATI programs are *more* effective than incarceration at improving public safety outcomes,² decreasing the chance of future convictions³, improving employment rates,⁴ and generating significant savings for taxpayers.⁵ Across New York City, ATI and reentry programs yield reductions in homelessness and psychiatric hospitalizations as well as

¹“Nunez DKT 803 Contempt Order.” Nunez Contempt Order. Accessed March 5, 2025.

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25419017-nunez-dkt-803-contempt-order/?q=enormous%2Bresources&mode=document#document/p55>, p56.

²Mendel, R. (2023, June 28). *Effective alternatives to youth incarceration*. The Sentencing Project.

³Baber, L., Wolff, K., Muller, J., Dozier, C. & Cordeiro, R. (2021, December). Expanding the Analysis: Alternatives to Incarceration across 13 Federal Districts. *Federal Probation*, 85(3).

⁴Johnson, A., Ali-Smith, M., & McCann, S. (2022, April 28). *Diversification programs are a smart, sustainable investment in public...* Vera Institute of Justice.

⁵Cloud, D., & Davis, C. (2013, February). *Treatment alternatives to incarceration for people with ...* Vera Institute of Justice.

increases in health-seeking behavior, relational connections, meaningful participation in the economy as well as an overall desistance from crime.⁶

Where even a short stay on Rikers Island can subject someone to trauma and abuse, and can exacerbate or even cause a substance use disorder, ATIs build an individual's capacity to overcome or mitigate problematic drug use, seek treatment for mental health disorders, engage health services prior to crisis utilization, and ultimately thrive in community. It is why our programs do not end our commitment to our participants when their mandate is over. We offer a lifetime of connection to care and supports.

And yet, I sit before you today, representing the aforementioned ecosystem who are now staring down nearly \$12 million in cuts – \$3.8 million and \$8 million for ATI and reentry, respectively.

We know that the expansion of ATIs and reentry services alone will not decarcerate Rikers. However, these programs are some of the most meaningful mechanisms we have available to envision and scale a more comprehensive, human-centered approach to public safety. The current administration as well as the City Council should be leading the charge to invest in them.

Earlier this year, the New York City ATI and Reentry Coalition released a narrative-based report highlighting stories of five New York City residents who were offered diversion from Rikers – and in some cases, were facing a lengthy prison sentence – to community-based ATI programs. The stories featured in this report are just a snapshot of the stories the NYC providers see each and every day. Many of these stories start with trauma – childhood abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as the trauma of poverty, early interactions with racism and police brutality. All of these stories, however, end with resilient New Yorkers who went through rigorous programming and training and have emerged not only as thriving members of their communities, but as leaders.

While I encourage the members of this committee to read the report in full, I want to name some of the achievements of the programs within our New York City ATI and Reentry Coalition network:

- CASES' Nathaniel ACT team, which works with people with serious mental illness who are facing felony charges, connects clients with a comprehensive mobile treatment team that directly provides psychiatric care and therapy, medication management, nursing, peer support, food, clothing, housing & employment support. These interventions have shown measurable success, with participants experiencing a 70% reduction in homelessness and a 50% reduction in psychiatric hospitalizations. Following clients for two years after their completion of court monitoring, 94% had no new felony convictions and 100% had no new violent felony convictions.⁷

⁶New York City ATI/Reentry Coalition. (2023, June 28) *Letter to Mayor Eric Adams*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. *The Limits of Recidivism: Measuring Success After Prison*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26459>.

⁷ CASES Nathaniel Act data, available upon request.

- exalt youth, which works with youth between the ages of 15 and 19, provides holistic supports and services to create pathways from the justice system into long term success. Two years post-graduation, 95 percent of exalt's young people have not recidivated while 98 percent are re-engaged with education and scheduled to graduate highschool or with an equivalency by 20-years old.
- The Fortune Society, a comprehensive, wraparound service provider works to ensure that New Yorkers receive holistic programming, including but not limited to housing, education, substance use and mental health treatment as well as supports such as benefits application assistance and family services, boasts an 82 percent completion rate in their ATI programs.
- Osborne Association's Court Mitigation Services prevented 1,411 years of incarceration and a cost savings to the City and State of more than \$162 million, while achieving a 93% successful disposition rate

In closing, the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition requests a restoration of the cuts proposed in the January Executive Budget, and an increase from the City Council of \$2.4 million dollars to continue this critical work.

Thank you.

For further questions, please email Dr. Megan French-Marcelin at mfrenchmarcelin@lac.org or call at [REDACTED].



New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10001-4017

Tel: 212-244-4664

Fax: 212-244-4570

TTY: 212-244-3692

www.nylpi.org

**Testimony of
William Juhn, Senior Staff Attorney
on behalf of the Disability Justice Program
at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
before the Council of the City of New York
Committee on Public Safety
March 11, 2025**

My name is William Juhn and I am a Senior Staff Attorney with the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (“NYLPI”). Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding public safety in New York City. On March 27, 2024, New York Police Department (“NYPD”) officers fatally shot Win Rozario, who was 19 years old, while he was experiencing a mental health crisis in Queens for which he had called 911 for help. How many more individuals must die by the hands of police before we finally adopt a more humane, peer-led, and person-centric approach to mental health crises?

NYLPI is deeply concerned about the City’s dangerous and illegal practices relating to the involuntary removal of individuals perceived to have mental illness diagnoses for psychiatric evaluation. We also oppose the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (“B-HEARD”) pilot in its current guise as it is deeply flawed and diverts resources desperately needed for a true non-police response to mental health crisis into a program that continues the criminalization of disability. NYLPI urges the City Council to mandate significant changes to B-HEARD so that it dispatches teams of peers—individuals with lived mental health experience—and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who are not City employees, operates 24/7, routes calls through 988, and above all, prioritizes the self-determination of people with mental disabilities.

THE MAYOR MUST IMMEDIATELY RESCIND HIS POLICY OF FORCIBLY REMOVING INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVED TO HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSIS AND PERCEIVED TO BE “UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR BASIC NEEDS,” BUT WHO DO NOT PRESENT A DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS

The Mayor’s Involuntary Removal Policy launched in November 2022, allows a police officer to detain an individual by force, and remove the individual to a psychiatric hospital, solely because the officer believes the individual has a mental disability and is unable to meet “basic needs” -- without any indication that the individual is a danger to themselves or others.

The Policy is both illegal and immoral. By failing to mandate that an individual is “conducting himself or herself in a manner which is likely to result in serious harm to the person or others,” the Involuntary Removal Policy runs afoul of Section 9.41 of New York’s Mental Hygiene Law, as well as myriad other federal and state constitutional and statutory provisions, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and New York City Human Rights Law.

Mayor Adams’ statements, as well as the City’s November 28, 2022 press release, entitled “Mental Health Involuntary Removals,” make clear that city agencies have aggressively instituted involuntary removals by police officers who have little to no expertise in dealing with individuals with mental disabilities and who will be required to determine whether an individual should be forcefully detained against their will. The examples cited by Mayor Adams at his press conference illustrate how difficult it is for police officers to make these sorts of determinations and how likely it is that the rights of New Yorkers will be violated by the Involuntary Removal Policy. Mayor Adams’ example of “the shadow boxer on the street corner in Midtown, mumbling to himself as he jabs at an invisible adversary,” does not describe someone who is unable to care for their basic needs, let alone describe someone who meets the standard of serious danger to themselves or others. The City’s Involuntary Removal Policy also contains no information about how an officer would even go about determining whether such shadow boxers are unable to take care of their basic needs or are merely exercising. Even though the City touted the success of the policy one

year after its launch, the City offered no data on its implementation, including whether people of color are being disproportionately targeted.

The City must rescind the Involuntary Removal Policy to ensure that no New Yorkers are subjected to unlawful detention and involuntary hospitalization just for exhibiting behavior perceived by a police officer to be unusual—whether the individual has a mental disability or not.

To be clear, we do not in any way support the failed policies of our broken mental health care system that leave at-risk individuals in unacceptable states of distress and deterioration. But forced treatment – if it even can be called treatment – is not responsive to the issue of public safety to which the Mayor consistently ties it. In fact, people with mental health diagnoses are no more likely to be violent than individuals without such a diagnoses.¹ Inpatient hospitalization provides short-term care that, at best, temporarily stabilizes an individual. It does not connect them to, or provide, the mental health services and housing that are necessary for the individual to succeed in the community. In fact, all too often, involuntary inpatient and outpatient services traumatize individuals, erode trust in the system, and divert critical resources away from solutions that actually work. In- and out-patient commitment must not be the default services for individuals with serious mental illness.

In addition to harm caused by forced commitment, the City Council must take note of the ignoble fact that people of color are subject to highly disproportionate numbers of involuntary treatment measures. Most notably, the New York State Office of Mental Health’s statistics demonstrate that over three out of five Involuntary Outpatient Commitment orders statewide, and over four out of five Involuntary Outpatient Commitment orders in New York City, involve people of color.² There is no clearer evidence of the failure of our public mental health system to

¹ U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Mental Health: Get the Facts,” <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/myths-and-facts#:~:text=Myth%3A%20People%20with%20mental%20health,with%20a%20serious%20mental%20illness.>

² N.Y.S. Office of Mental Health, “Characteristics of Recipients: Demographics,” https://my.omh.ny.gov/analytics/saw.dll?PortalPages&PortalPath=%2Fshared%2FAOTLP%2F_portal%2FAssisted

successfully serve people of color. Addressing this failure must be a priority for the government and our provider systems. The surest way of preventing risk to individuals with serious mental illness is through expansion of the evidence-based and community-based mental health services identified below, which will improve the care of thousands of people going forward.

THE CITY MUST WHOLLY TRANSFORM ITS RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES BY ELIMINATING POLICE AND REPLACING THEM WITH A PEER-LED HEALTH RESPONSE

The City must join other cities across the country – including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Albuquerque, Denver, New Haven and many more – to **remove police** entirely from the equation, and **ensure that *healthcare workers respond to healthcare crises***. According to [joint-research](#) by NYLPI and Human Rights Watch, there are at least 160+ emergency response programs nationwide that engage in crisis response activities without police as the initial responders or as automatic co-responders.

Closer to home, New York State is already taking action. The state legislators are working to pass a bill known as Daniel’s Law (S3670/ A4617), which would establish a statewide emergency and crisis response system where police are no longer the default first responders to health emergencies. Under Daniel’s Law, the state will only fund emergency response plans where EMTs and peers control the response to a health emergency, and the role of police would be strictly limited to situations involving imminent risk of serious physical harm. The bill currently has over 50 sponsors in the Assembly and the Senate.

Likewise, the City must establish a system whereby individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and which will ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals

to receive such training are health care providers and peers.³ Police officers, who are trained to uphold law and order, are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises, and New York's history of its police killing 20 individuals who were experiencing crises in the last nine years alone, is sad testament to that. Eliminating the police as mental health crisis responders has been shown to result in quicker recovery from crises, greater connections with long-term healthcare services and other community resources, and averting future crises.⁴

The scores of people experiencing mental health crises who have died at the hands of the police over the years is a microcosm of the police brutality around the world. Disability is disproportionately prevalent in the Black community and other communities of color,⁵ and individuals who are shot and killed by the police when experiencing mental health crises are disproportionately Black and other people of color. Of the 20 individuals killed by police in the last nine years, 17 – or greater than 80% -- were Black or other people of color. The City Council simply cannot stand by while the killings continue. Now is the time to remove the police as responders to mental health crises – and certainly we must all oppose the Mayor's efforts to increase the role and funding of the NYPD as it relates to people with mental disabilities. Lives are literally at stake.

[Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC](#) has developed the needed antidote. Modeled on the [CAHOOTS](#) program in Oregon, which has successfully operated for over 35 years without any serious injuries to respondents or responders – let alone deaths -- the CCIT-NYC proposal is

³ See Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, “When There’s a Crisis, Call a Peer: How People With Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective,” (2024), <https://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bazelon-When-Theres-a-Crisis-Call-A-Peer-full-01-03-24.pdf>; Martha Williams Deane, *et al.*, “Emerging Partnerships between Mental Health and Law Enforcement,” *Psychiatric Services* (1999), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Aacrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&#/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Aacrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed.

⁴ Henry J. Steadman, *et al.*, “A Specialized Crisis Response Site as a Core Element of Police-Based Diversion Programs,” *Psychiatric Services* (2001), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.52.2.219?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Psychiatric_Services_TrendMD_0.

⁵ Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, “Accessible NYC” (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

positioned to make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises in New York City. The proposal avoids the enormous pitfalls of the City's B-HEARD pilot, which the City inaccurately refers to as a non-police model. The full text of the CCIT-NYC proposal can be found at <https://www.ccitnyc.org/ourproposal>.

THE CITY MUST ENTIRELY REVAMP THE B-HEARD PILOT AS THE PILOT AUTHORIZES EXTENSIVE POLICE INVOLVEMENT AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE OR EVEN INCREASE THE RATE OF VIOLENT RESPONSES BY THE NYPD

The City, via its Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health (formerly ThriveNYC), introduced a pilot program in 2021 that it contends is responsive to the need to cease the killings at the hands of the police of individuals experiencing mental health crises. Unfortunately, that is simply not the case, despite the City's glowing description of the program. Among B-HEARD's grim statistics are the following:

- In Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023 through June 2024), over **70% of all mental health calls** in B-HEARD precincts were still **directed to the NYPD**, and B-Heard responded to only about **29% of total mental health calls** in the pilot area.
- Even when all kinks are ironed out, the City anticipates continuing to have about **50% of all mental health calls directed to the NYPD**.
- Moreover, **all mental health calls continue to go through 911**, which is under the NYPD's jurisdiction.
- The entire **program is run by the NYPD, the Fire Department and other City agencies**, with **NO role whatsoever for community organizations**. And there is not even any delineation of the lines of authority and communication among the various city agencies.
- **The crisis response teams are composed of EMTs who are City employees (from the Fire Department) who are deeply enmeshed in the current police-led response system.**

Peers do not trust these EMTs. The other team members are *licensed clinical* social workers. The licensure and clinical orientation requirements are unnecessary and they also preclude a vast array of potential candidates who have excellent skills and a long history of working with people experiencing crises.

- B-HEARD has ***NO* requirement to hire peers.**
- **The training of the teams does *NOT* require a trauma-informed framework, need *NOT* be experiential, and need *NOT* use skilled instructors who are peers or even care providers.**
- The anticipated **response time for crisis calls could be as long as half an hour**, and when last reported averaged over **fifteen minutes**,⁶ which is not even remotely comparable to the City's response times for other emergencies of 8 to 11 minutes.
- **The pilot operates only sixteen hours a day.**
- **There are no outcome/effectiveness metrics.**
- **There is no oversight mechanism.**

A comparison of the CCIT-NYC proposal, which is based on the CAHOOTS model with a stellar track record, and the B-HEARD program, which is not aligned with any best practices, is illustrated in the following chart:

⁶ Regrettably, the average response time was not even collected for the last reporting period.

Critical Attributes of a Mental Health Crisis Response System	CCIT-NYC's Proposal	NYC's B-HEARD Proposal
Removal of police responders	YES	NO (currently, around 79% of calls are still responded to by police, and even when all kinks are removed, 50% of calls will still be responded to by police)
Three-digit phone number such as 988, in lieu of 911.	YES	NO
Response team to consist of an independent EMT and a trained peer who has lived experience of mental health crises and know best how to engage people in need of support	YES	NO (licensed clinical social worker and EMT employed by the New York City Bureau of Emergency Medical Services)
Crisis response program run by community-based entity/ies which will provide culturally competent care and will more likely have a history with the person in need and can intervene prior to a crisis	YES	NO (run by New York City Police Department and other City agencies)
Peer involvement in all aspects of planning/implementation/oversight	YES	NO
Oversight board consisting of 51% peers from low-income communities, especially Black, Latinx, and other communities of color	YES	NO
Creation/funding of non-coercive mental health services ("safety net"), including respite centers and 24/7 mental health care to minimize crises in the first place and to serve those for whom crisis de-escalation is insufficient	YES	NO
Response times comparable to those of other emergencies	YES	NO (Most recently reported response time of over 15 minutes -- compared with average response time of 8

		to 11 minutes for non-mental health emergencies)
Response available 24/7	YES	NO (Response only available 16 hours/day)
Training of the teams to use a trauma-informed framework, be experiential, and use skilled instructors who are peers	YES	NO

NYLPI urges the City Council to ensure that the money previously allocated for a non-police mental health crisis response be utilized solely for a truly non-police response, and to mandate substantial modifications to the B-HEARD program by including the critical components of the CCIT-NYC proposal.

THE CITY COUNCIL MUST ENSURE THAT NEW YORKERS HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF VOLUNTARY NON-HOSPITAL, COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES THAT PROMOTE RECOVERY AND WELLNESS, AS WELL AS A FULL PANOPLY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, INCLUDING HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION, BY ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR SUCH PROGRAMS

Since NYLPI was established nearly 50 years ago, we have prioritized advocating on behalf of individuals with mental health conditions, and we have consistently fought to ensure that the rights of individuals with mental health conditions are protected by every aspect of New York’s service delivery system. Core to our work is the principle of self-determination for all individuals with disabilities, along with the right to access a robust healthcare system that is available on a *voluntary, non-coercive* basis.

We have long been on record opposing mandatory outpatient and inpatient treatment for failing to offer appropriate healthcare and insufficiently safeguarding the rights of persons with mental disabilities. In line with our continued advocacy for comprehensive mental health treatment

in New York, NYLPI has released our latest report: Implementation of Kendra's Law Continues to be Severely Biased⁷. The report outlines that there is no proof that Involuntary Outpatient Commitment is more effective than voluntary treatment. We make key, urgent recommendations for New York to discontinue use of Kendra's Law and in no event expand its scope or reach, and in the interim, take proactive measures to eliminate racial bias from Involuntary Outpatient Commitment.

Quite simply, there is no place for coercion. Forced “treatment” is not treatment at all, and it has long been rejected by health practitioners -- to say nothing of the disability community – in favor of numerous best practices strategies that offer assistance even to those who have previously resisted offers of care.⁸ There are multiple less invasive models of care that New York City must invest in to avoid the tragedy and enormous cost of forced treatment. At the heart of these models are trained peers, who are ideally suited to implement effective harm reduction and de-escalation techniques, especially during crises.

We know how to help those with the most severe mental illness, but we fail to do so, instead providing services that are insufficient or not held to the highest accountability. We face complete system failure, yet we have done little to correct the failure and even point our fingers at those most affected by the system failure. We must stop the finger pointing and fix the system. We must invest in innovative, voluntary health programs. And we must invest in supportive housing, rather than cart people off to a psychiatric ward or to jail.

Any proposal that facilitates the ability to force people into in-patient or out-patient “treatment” must be seen in the context of whom we’re entrusting to “remove” these individuals.

⁷ NYLPI, “Implementation of Kendra's Law Continues to be Severely Biased” (2025), <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Implementation-of-Kendras-Law-Continues-to-be-Severely-Biased-Report-1.pdf>

⁸ See, e.g., de Bruijn-Wezeman, Reina “Ending Coercion in Mental Health: The Need for a Human Rights-Based Approach,” Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 14895 (May 22, 2019), <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=27701&lang=en>.

As we now surely know all too well, the police, who are steeped in law and order, are not well-suited to deal with individuals with mental health concerns. The Mayor's policy includes an outsized role for the police, and the City Council must halt it immediately.

Forced "treatment" must also be seen in the context of existing racial disparities. Of the 20 individuals killed at the hands of New York City police in recent years, 17 were people of color. This systemic racism also underlies the disproportionate prevalence of disability in the Black community and other communities of color.⁹ The racial disparities in the application of Involuntary Outpatient Commitment are also vast¹⁰.

While there is extensive literature supporting voluntary treatment, there is no support for the success of forced evaluation and treatment.

CONCLUSION

NYLPI respectfully requests that the City Council:

- Halt the Mayor's policy of forcibly removing individuals perceived to have a mental illness diagnosis and perceived to be "unable to care for their basic needs," but who do not present a danger to themselves or others.
- Mandate changes to the B-HEARD program to align it with the truly non-police, peer-led CCIT-NYC model.
- Ensure that New Yorkers have access to a wide range of non-hospital, community-based mental health services that promote recovery and wellness, as well as a full panoply of community services, including housing, employment, and education, by allocating funding for such programs.

⁹Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, "Accessible NYC" (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

¹⁰ NYLPI, *supra* note 5 at 13.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at (212) 244-4664 or wjuhn@nylpi.org, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how best to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing mental health crises in New York City.

###

About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For nearly 50 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.

NYLPI's Disability Justice Program works to advance the civil rights of New Yorkers with disabilities. In the past five years alone, NYLPI disability advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Our landmark victories include integration into the community for people with mental illness, access to medical care and government services, and increased accessibility of New York City's public hospitals. We prioritize the reform of New York City's response to individuals experiencing mental health crises, and have successfully litigated to obtain the body-worn camera footage from the NYPD officers who shot and killed individuals experiencing mental health crises. In late 2021, NYLPI and co-counsel filed a class action lawsuit which seeks to halt New York's practice of dispatching police to respond to mental health crises, and in the context of that lawsuit, seeks relief on behalf of individuals affected by the Mayor's Involuntary Removal Policy. We filed a companion lawsuit in 2024 on behalf of an individual shot within an inch of his life when experiencing a mental health crisis.

Community Voluntary Long-Term Innovations for At-Risk Individuals

Residential

Crisis Respite – Intensive Crisis Residential Program: OMH program: “a safe place for the stabilization of psychiatric symptoms and a range of services from support to treatment services for children and adults. are intended to be located in the community and provide a home-like setting.” <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/bho/docs/crisis-residence-program-guidance.pdf>.

Crisis Respite (shorter term and less intensive): OMH Program: “Crisis Respite Centers provide an alternative to hospitalization for people experiencing emotional crises. They are warm, safe and supportive home-like places to rest and recover when more support is needed than can be provided at home. The Crisis Respite Centers offer stays for up to one week and provide an open-door setting where people can continue their daily activities. Trained peers and non-peers work with individuals to help them successfully overcome emotional crises. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/crisis-emergency-services-respite-centers.page>.

Peer Crisis Respite programs: OMH funded; Peer operated short-term crisis respites that are home-like alternatives to hospital psychiatric ERs and inpatient units. Guests can stay up to seven nights, and they can come-and-go for appointments, jobs, and other essential needs. Offers a “full, customizable menu of services designed to help them understand what happened that caused their crisis, educate them about skills and resources that can help in times of emotional distress, explore the relationship between their current situation and their overall well-being, resolve the issues that brought them to the house, learn simple and effective ways to feel better, connect with other useful services and supports in the community, and feel comfortable returning home after their stay.” <https://people-usa.org/program/rose-houses/>.

Housing First: a housing approach that prioritizes permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness and frequently serious mental illness and substance use issues. Supportive services including substance use counseling and treatment are part of the model, but abstinence or even engagement in services is not required. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>.

Soteria: a Therapeutic Community Residence for the prevention of hospitalization for individuals experiencing a distressing extreme state, commonly referred to as psychosis. We believe that psychosis can be a temporary experience that one works through rather than a chronic mental illness that needs to be managed. We practice the approach of “being with” – this is a process of actively staying present with people and learning about their experiences. <https://www.pathwaysvermont.org/what-we-do/our-programs/soteria-house/>.

Safe Haven: provides transitional housing for vulnerable street homeless individuals, primarily women. “low-threshold” resources: they have fewer requirements, making them attractive to those who are resistant to emergency shelter. Safe Havens offer intensive case management, along with mental health and substance abuse assistance, with the ultimate goal of moving each client into permanent housing. <https://breakingground.org/our-housing/midwood>.

Family Crisis Respite: trained and paid community members with extra space in their homes provide respite for individuals who can thereby avoid hospitalization.

Living Room model: a community crisis center that offers people experiencing a mental health crisis an alternative to hospitalization. health crises a calm and safe environment. The community outpatient centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and people receive care immediately. Services include: crisis intervention, a safe place in which to rest and relax, support from peer counselors; intervention from professional counselors including teaching de-escalation skills and developing safety plans, Linkage with referrals for emergency housing, healthcare, food, and mental health services. https://smiadviser.org/knowledge_post/what-is-the-living-room-model-for-people-experiencing-a-mental-health-crisis.

Crisis Stabilization Centers: 24/7 community crisis response hub where people of all ages can connect immediately with an integrated team of clinical counselors, peer specialists, and behavioral health professionals, as well as to our local community's health & human service providers, to address any mental health, addiction, or social determinant of health needs. People use the Stabilization Center when they're experiencing emotional distress, acute psychiatric symptoms, addiction challenges, intoxication, family issues, and other life stressors. <https://people-usa.org/program/crisis-stabilization-center/>.

Parachute NYC / Open Dialogue: provides a non-threatening environment where people who are coming undone can take a break from their turbulent lives and think through their problems before they reach a crisis point. Many who shun hospitals and crisis stabilization units will voluntarily seek help at respite centers. Parachute NYC includes mobile treatment units and phone counseling in addition to the four brick-and-mortar respite centers. <https://www.nyaprs.org/e-news-bulletins/2015/parachute-nyc-highlights-success-of-peer-crisis-model-impact-of-community-access>.

Non-residential

Safe Options Support teams: consisting of direct outreach workers as well as clinicians to help more New Yorkers come off of streets and into shelters and/or housing. SOS CTI Teams will be comprised of licensed clinicians, care managers, peers, and registered nurses. Services will be provided for up to 12 months, pre- and post-housing placement, with an intensive initial outreach and engagement period that includes multiple visits per week, each for several hours. Participants will learn self-management skills and master activities of daily living on the road to self-efficacy and recovery. The teams' outreach will facilitate connection to treatment and support services. The SOS CTI Teams will follow the CTI model – a time-limited, evidence-based service that helps vulnerable individuals during periods of transitions. The teams will be serving individuals as they transition from street homelessness to housing. https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/rfp/2022/sos/sos_cti_rfp.pdf.

Intensive and Sustained Engagement Team (INSET): a model of integrated peer and professional services provides rapid, intensive, flexible and sustained interventions to help individuals who have experienced frequent periods of acute states of distress, frequent emergency room visits, hospitalizations and criminal justice involvement and for whom prior programs of care and support have been ineffective. MHA has found that participants, previously labeled “non-adherent,” “resistant to treatment” or “in need of a higher level of care” and “mandated services,” become voluntarily engaged and motivated to work toward

recovery once offered peer connection, hope and opportunities to collaborate, share in decisions and exercise more control over their lives and their services and supports. their treatment plans. Engaged 80% of people either AOT eligible or AOT involved. <https://www.mhwestchester.org/our-services/treatment-support>.

NYAPRS Peer Bridger™ program: a peer-run and staffed model providing transitional support for people being discharged from state and local hospitals, with the goal of helping people to live successfully in the community, breaking cycles of frequent relapses and readmissions. The program include inpatient and community based intensive one on one peer support groups, discharge planning, connection to community resources; provides access to emergency housing, wrap around dollars and free cell phones and minutes. <https://www.nyaprs.org/peer-bridger>.

NYC Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health Intensive Mobile Treatment teams: provide intensive and continuous support and treatment to individuals right in their communities, where and when they need it. Clients have had recent and frequent contact with the mental health, criminal justice, and homeless services systems, recent behavior that is unsafe and escalating, and who were poorly served by traditional treatment models. IMT teams include mental health, substance use, and peer specialists who provide support and treatment including medication, and facilitate connections to housing and additional supportive services. <https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/program/intensive-mobile-treatment-imt>.

Pathway Home™: a community-based care transition/management intervention offering intensive, mobile, time-limited services to individuals transitioning from an institutional setting back to the community. CBC acts as a single point of referral to multidisciplinary teams at ten care management agencies (CMAs) in CBC's broader IPA network. These teams maintain small caseloads and offer flexible interventions where frequency, duration and intensity is tailored to match the individual's community needs and have the capacity to respond rapidly to crisis. <https://cbcare.org/innovative-programs/pathway-home/>.

**Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety**

Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 11, 2025

Allison Hollihan, Director
NY Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents

Tarini Garimella, Policy Associate
Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations



Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Allison Hollihan, and I am the Director of the New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents at the Osborne Association. As many of you know, Osborne is one of the oldest and largest criminal justice service organizations in the state. Our services reach over 14,000 individuals each year, assisting them and their families in navigating arrest, courts, incarceration on Rikers and in state prisons, and reentry. Through advocacy, direct service, and policy reform, Osborne works to create opportunities for people to heal, grow, and thrive. We are grateful for the Council's ongoing support and look forward to continued collaboration.

My testimony will focus on the largely invisible issue of how children are affected by a parent's arrest; what is currently being done to minimize trauma to children before, during, and after a parent's arrest; how critical it is for NYPD to implement Administrative Code §14-181 (the result of a 2019 City Council law) and develop an ongoing, sustainable plan to train personnel; and the importance of NYPD and community-based organizations continuing to build their capacity to safeguard and support children of arrested parents in New York City.

We applaud the City Council for passing a bill in 2019 (Administrative Code §14-181) that requires NYPD to adopt guidelines for safeguarding children present during an arrest, train officers, and provide families with information about services in the community to help children process the arrest of a parent. We are grateful to have received City Council funding to work with NYPD and community-based organizations to implement this law. The funding has allowed us to train over six thousands of officers and sergeants and to take unprecedented steps toward safeguarding children, but we have much more to accomplish. We have submitted a request for continued funding, including expanding our work to the NYC Department of Correction to safeguard and improve interactions with children who visit Rikers.

This funding has had a statewide impact as well: in large part as a result of our work, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) passed an accreditation standard in June 2023 requiring all accredited NYS police departments to have a written protocol and provide training to ensure

children are safeguarded and trauma is minimized. Then in December 2024, Governor Hochul signed the Child-Sensitive Arrest bill [into law](#). These significant steps forward would not have been possible without the City Council passing a local law to Safeguard Children of Arrested Parents and supporting efforts to successfully implement the law.

Children are deeply affected by a parent's arrest, yet it is rare to find a law enforcement agency that provides training to officers on child development and interacting with children. To address this critical gap, Osborne served as an advisor for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) model protocol on safeguarding children at the time of a parent's arrest issued in 2013. Since then, we have developed curricula for and trained the Albany, Buffalo, Hudson, Tonawanda, and Cheektowaga Police Departments, and the Erie County Sheriff's Office, which have each also issued written policies. This curriculum has been informed by law enforcement, research on child development and trauma, and young people telling us what they need to be considered, validated, and seen.

We are currently collaborating with NYPD to conduct training for new recruits and promotional classes regarding the Patrol Guide sections on safeguarding children, child development, trauma, and interacting with children. In the upcoming fiscal year, it is critical for the NYPD Training Bureau to become equipped to fully facilitate the training developed by Osborne and to develop a plan that integrates this into routine training for all staffing levels. We have urged the NYPD to develop a sustainable plan for training all uniformed members of service (UMOS) on the new safeguarding protocols, but substantive planning has yet to begin.

I will now provide some background to underscore the importance of this work and why it is a multi-year effort.

The Impact and Scope of Parental Arrest on Children

From our programs, we know that children and young people often carry the experience of witnessing the arrest of a parent for years or even a lifetime. They share that they felt invisible

and vulnerable at the time, or felt seen but ignored. As a result, many tell us they are hesitant to reach out to the police when they need assistance, and fear law enforcement after what they have been through. Witnessing an arrest and being stripped from a parent is a traumatic experience. Research tells us that trauma negatively affects a person's brain and that having an incarcerated parent (almost always preceded by a parent's arrest) is the fourth most common Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)¹, which increases the likelihood of children developing long-term negative health and mental health outcomes.²

We also know that protective factors can lessen the harmful effects of these experiences, and that police officers and community partners can be protective factors for children. Efforts to safeguard children at the time of arrest have the potential to build new and strengthen existing community-police partnerships while signaling to families that the police and their community will do everything possible to minimize trauma for a child whose parent is arrested. Thus, it is critical to ensure this local law is effectively implemented, and for NYPD and community partners to receive the necessary training to safeguard children.

Currently, there is no data on how many children are present when a parent or caregiver is arrested in NYC. We provided the NYPD with data collection recommendations, including updating their "aided card" to collect this data, but were told that adding a check box to the aided card would be a lengthy process that the NYPD was not willing to undertake. Knowing how many children are affected is critical to identifying trends, monitoring implementation of the law, and informing funding allocations to ensure community-based support is available for children post-arrest. For several years, the only source for this data was the New York City Criminal Justice Agency (CJA), when it included supplementary questions (not included in its bail assessment) in interviews of people in New York City awaiting arraignment.³ Those interviewed by CJA in 2019 indicated they provided care or support to more than **60,347** children in New

¹ National Survey of Children's Health, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.
<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/data/national-surveys>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences,
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html

³ This data reveals that 4,286 (4.3%) of the 98,675 respondents awaiting arraignment provided full-time care to children, and 31,203 (31.6%) respondents provided financial support to one or more children.

York City, making it clear that this work is critical for safeguarding many of New York City's children. However, CJA is no longer collecting this robust data, nor did they ever collect data on how many children witness a parent's arrest. Documenting how many children are present at a parent's or /caregiver's arrest was not included in the 2019 law and we urge the Council to introduce a bill requiring NYPD to do so. We urge the Council to introduce a bill requiring NYPD to collect this data.

To expand on our success collaborating with NYPD and to better support the children who visit Rikers, our funding request this year includes expanding our Safeguarding Children work to DOC to provide training to Officers interacting with children, and to examine ways the Department can support children's positive visiting experiences. This work to enhance children's experiences and provide tools to Officers builds on our longstanding collaboration with DOC to improve visiting. We were initial members of the DOC Visiting Workgroup, created back in 2014, and provided visit training to Officers in 2019. The current work proposed has great potential to not only support the well-being of children who visit Rikers, but also the well-being of Officers who deserve these tools, clarity, and skills-building. We aim to be an asset and of assistance to DOC administrators so we can respond to their requests for background materials and resources such as book lists and toys for children that are permissible in a jail. Our knowledge of visiting in the context of jails and prisons extends back decades to when Osborne first launched its first Family Center inside of Sing Sing men's prison about 30 years ago.

Accomplishments

Given the estimated scope of the issue, the size of NYPD, and frequent departmental and organizational changes, our work to safeguard children is a multi-year, multi-faceted effort requiring immense coordination, time, and adaptability. I'd like to highlight some of our accomplishments, the work currently underway, and work needed in the coming years.

To date, thanks to City Council funding, we have trained over 6,000 members of service, including recruits, newly promoted Sergeants, Training Sergeants, and Youth Coordinating Officers. The responses on our training evaluations have been largely positive. For example, one

Sergeant indicated that the training would help officers “consider children’s perspectives and take steps to reduce trauma to the extent possible.” Officers also shared that the training would help them communicate effectively with children, remind them to make children on scene more of a priority, increase their empathy, and for some, reinforce what they are already doing.

Despite all of this, our efforts have yet to reach most of the 36,000 uniformed members of service (UMOS) who are interacting with individuals and children on a daily basis.

Work that is still needed:

- Collaborating with the NYPD Training Bureau to develop a sustainable training plan;
- Reviewing existing NYPD curricula to identify areas where safeguarding children material can be infused;
- Continue partnering with the Office of Collaborative Policing on implementing the law, and collaborating on an NYPD-produced refresher training video for roll call and in-service training;
- Expanding the number of community partners engaged in this work and providing technical assistance and training;
- Engage NYC Department of Correction (DOC) to develop a Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents protocol that reflects best practices, when visitors with children are arrested;
- Engage the NYC DOC to develop and facilitate training for Visiting Processing and Room Officers; and
- Engage the NYC DOC to further develop and implement child-friendly visiting processes.

While much is happening right now, there is much more to do. With 36,000 UMOs, a complex network of community providers in NYC, and many elements to implement, achieving a truly comprehensive, citywide approach to safeguarding children will take time. Therefore, it is imperative that NYPD develop and enact a sustainable training plan that can be carried out by the NYPD Training Bureau without the assistance of Osborne. We are grateful to be partnering with

NYPD and look forward to working with DOC as well. Osborne offers many services, programs, and innovative approaches that promote public safety in NYC, including our Court Advocacy Services, an array of services for young people, and efforts to address violence and harm that heal rather than further harm individuals and communities.

One final note about public safety: this year, Osborne enters its 93rd year of providing programs and advocating for justice. These decades have taught us that public safety is an outcome of investing in people and communities. Today, this means prioritizing alternatives to arrest, jail, and prison whenever possible, and working to decarcerate and to close Rikers Island. The city and state must continue to implement pre-trial reforms and measures to expedite court processes. People are spending unprecedented amounts of time on Rikers, with dire consequences to their health, families, and long-term wellbeing. The plan to Close Rikers by August 2027 must proceed as required by law. Reducing the number of people detained in our city jails and the length of time they spend there must be a priority for the Council and the city, for our shared humanity and for smarter investments that improve on the dismal return we currently receive for spending more than \$507,000 per person per year on Rikers.

Osborne has submitted seven discretionary funding requests, all of which promote public safety for New York City, and these are summarized in an attachment to my testimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Contact: Allison Hollihan

Director, New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents (NYCIP)

ahollihan@osborneny.org

**The Osborne Association
New York City Council
FY26 Discretionary Funding Requests**

Program	Description	FY26 Request	FY25 Funding
Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Services (Ref. 194457)	Osborne’s portion of the ATI coalition request, which will support multiple programs: (1) court advocacy and mitigation services; (2) video visiting and family strengthening activities; (3) expansion of job training and placement; (4) elder reentry services; and (5) the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations.	\$2,052,074	\$1,852,074
Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention Program - BOGAP (Ref: 193844)	To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA—to serve approximately 75 participants annually. Funds will be used to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional support services to participants to increase their chances of success in the program.	\$20,000	\$20,000
Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 194063)	To support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative’s participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne’s advocacy and public education on behalf of older adults.	\$125,000	\$90,000

Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 193984)	To support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, prevention/treatment, trauma support, and other supportive services.	\$110,000	\$104,325
Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 193568)	To support the work of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests the parent of a child. Osborne will provide necessary training and administrative support to the NYPD, and engage and train a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children.	\$300,000	\$265,000
Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 194209)	For assessing and addressing mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system through treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Targets: 60 assessments; 120 referrals.	\$158,000	\$158,000
Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 194304)	To sustain and expand the <i>Kinship Reentry Housing Program</i> , which provides financial assistance, case management, and peer support to families housing a loved one returning from incarceration. By addressing economic and logistical barriers to stable reentry housing, the program reduces reliance on the shelter system, strengthens family reunification, and lowers the risk of recidivism.	\$250,000	N/A



**TESTIMONY OF
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY**

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

City Hall,
New York, NY

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Preliminary Budget Hearing

PURPOSE: To highlight the need to invest more, not less, in
Alternative to Incarceration and Reentry Services.

Presented by

Rob DeLeon
Deputy CEO

The Fortune Society
29-76 Northern Blvd.
LIC, NY 11101
212-691-7554

<http://www.fortunesociety.com>

Good afternoon, Chair Salaam and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Rob Deleon, and I am the Deputy CEO at The Fortune Society. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the changemaking work of The Fortune Society and the critical role Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) and reentry programs play in encouraging public safety, promoting desistance, and supporting individuals in successfully rebuilding their lives. For 57 years, The Fortune Society has been committed to supporting people returning from incarceration and providing meaningful alternatives to incarceration. Our work is rooted in the belief that people can change when given the right support and that a just, humane, and rehabilitative criminal legal system is not only possible but necessary. In Fiscal Year 2024, Fortune served over 13,000 individuals through our broad array of programs, including ATI and reentry programming: employment services, mental health and substance use treatment, and across our continuum of housing programs. We house approximately 800 people every night in our emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing. We have seen firsthand how comprehensive, community-based interventions change lives, break cycles of incarceration, and create safer communities.

My personal experience with the criminal legal system is one that I discuss often in these kinds of forums, but in short: I went to prison at age 17 and after 10 years, I had to figure out how to navigate society and how to contribute to a household and help to raise my then 10-year-old daughter. Fortunately, I had the support of my family to sustain me until I got on my feet, but it was with the help of reentry services that I was able to secure employment despite the feelings of doubt that we experience upon reentry searching for work with a criminal record. While I have my own unique qualities as we all do, my story is not unique. So many men and women want to do what is right and need supportive services to help them to navigate. That is a victory not only for them and their families, but for all of us. That is what true public safety looks like.

We urge the Council to push back on the Administration's proposed cuts to ATI and reentry services. They are proposing to slash \$3.8 million from ATI programming and \$8 million from reentry services, both of which are overseen by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, (MOCJ). We must take public stock of the historical moment in which we are making this urgent request not just to spare us from cuts, but to instead increase our funding. We are facing an explosive humanitarian crisis in our carceral system in New York City and New York state. Since January of 2022, 35 people have died while in or recently released from the custody

of the city's Department of Correction (DOC).¹ People on Rikers Island continue to be at grave risk of physical harm, overdose, and continue to lack consistent access to necessary medical care, including mental health care.² In parallel, during the past few weeks of unauthorized strikes by state correctional staff, nine people have died in our state prisons.³ At least one of them, a 22-year-old young man from the Bronx, appears to have been beaten to death by corrections officers in a prison across the street from the facility where corrections officers beat 43-year-old Robert Brooks to death in December.⁴ The catastrophe unfolding in our prisons is now having a direct impact on our city jails. On Friday, in this very room, the DOC Commissioner testified that there are currently 327 people detained on Rikers Island who have been sentenced to state prison time but could not be transferred upstate due to the current instability and chaos. In this moment of crisis, the Administration is proposing to slash millions of dollars from the very programs that would prevent people from entering and reentering our jails and prisons. Instead of cutting these funds, we should be increasing them, now more than ever.

While proposing to cut nearly \$12 million dollars to ATI and reentry programming, the Administration is simultaneously proposing to increase the DOC budget by 9%, to a stunning \$2.87 billion dollars.⁵ It now costs over half a million dollars annually to hold a single person on Rikers Island.⁶ It is critical to note that even the federal judge presiding over the years-long monitoring of DOC in the *Nunez* case found that “enormous resources — that the city devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved — are not being deployed effectively.”⁷ In the face of such ineffective deployment of resources, it calls into question the

¹ Shanahan, E. (2025, Feb. 25). “2 Men Held in New York City Jails Die in a Week, Officials Say.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [2 Men Held in N.Y.C. Jails Die in a Week, Officials Say - The New York Times](#).

² Mayor's Preliminary Fiscal 2025 Management Report. Retrieved from <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2025/doc.pdf> (approximately 25% of people with medical appointments are not produced for those appointments).

³ Ransom, J. (2025, March 6). “New York Attorney General Recuses Herself From Inquiry Into Prison Death.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [New York Attorney General Recuses Herself From Inquiry Into Prison Death - The New York Times](#).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Vera Institute of Justice (2025, Feb.). *A Look Inside the New York City Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget*. Retrieved from <https://vera-institute.files.svdcn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>.

⁶ New York City Comptroller. (2024, July 16). *Ensuring Access to Timely Trials*. Retrieved from <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/ensuring-timely-trials/>.

⁷ Opinion and Order on Motion for Contempt. *Nunez v. New York City Department of Correction*, SDNY, No. 11-CV-5845-LTS, Nov. 26, 2024. Retrieved from <https://ecbawm.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nunez-Dkt-803-Contempt-Order.pdf>.

Administration's plan to increase funding for DOC while reducing funding for the services that we all know can keep more people from landing in or returning to our city jails. The City must redirect resources to reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration

ATI and reentry programs go beyond fulfilling court and supervision mandates; they are entry points to a network of services that empower people to rebuild their lives. At Fortune, we make a lifetime commitment to every single person that we serve. People whose court or parole mandates have ended routinely remain engaged in our services. Some people return weekly to see a therapist, or to participate in our creative writing workshop, or to take another employment services workshop to boost their employability. As an example, a participant I will call Mr. M was mandated to Fortune's ATI Gun Diversion program for 12 months. Throughout his time in the program, Mr. M managed to maintain full-time employment, which clearly cannot be done when detained pre-trial. Since completing his court mandate in November of last year, he continues to engage in our wraparound services and remain in contact with his case manager. Now, he is hoping to find permanent employment at Fortune. Other people come back to us years later when they hit a bump in the road, such as the loss of a job that triggers a relapse; that means they are not instead making bad choices out of desperation. Again, this is what true public safety looks like.

The people we serve at Fortune undergo transformations that should serve as inspiration to us all and proof that given access to opportunities, people can and do succeed. A participant in one of our MOCJ-funded programs, whom I will call Mr. S, exemplifies this: he was caught in a relentless cycle of addiction and incarceration that spanned years. Each time he was released, he struggled to stay sober and found himself returning to court and to jail, until he came to Fortune. With the support of his case manager and the structure of the program, Mr. S was finally able to address the root causes of his addiction. He enrolled in employment workshops, built a support network, and committed himself to change. Today, Mr. S is employed full-time, sober, and working toward securing his own apartment. Similarly, Ms. H participated in numerous workshops and courses with us after coming home from incarceration. She is now working on an art project that will be displayed at a local gallery, looking for full-time employment, and collaborating with community organizations on policy proposals to improve the justice system.

The people described above may sound exceptional, and they are, but they are not the exception. There are countless others who have benefited from our services and countless more who may do so if we do not lose funding. Their successes are testament to the power of comprehensive ATI and reentry services funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. Yet without sustained and increased investment, these programs will remain out of reach for too many New Yorkers who are eager to turn their lives around. Increased investment is essential to maintaining and expanding the services that keep New Yorkers out of jail and on pathways to success.

For far too long, we have relied on mass incarceration as a crime control strategy, despite clear evidence that it has negative impacts on families and communities and is not a recipe for public safety. We must not continue to waste resources on the punitive and ineffective strategy of increasing mass incarceration in our own backyard, which continues to cause worsening disproportionate harm to Black and brown families and communities.⁸ Investing in proven strategies is not only a moral necessity, it also aligns with public safety and fiscal wisdom and fosters economic justice, advances racial equity, and upholds our collective humanity.

Thank you, Chair Salaam, members of the Committee, and the other Council Members who have been such staunch supporters of Fortune's work and that of the ATI and Reentry Coalition, and the service community as a whole. Your support enables individuals who have had system involvement to move forward, contribute to their communities, and build the futures they deserve, which has the additional benefit of making us all safer.

⁸ Blau, R. (2023, March 2). "Racial Gap in City Jails Has Only Gotten Worse, John Jay Study Finds." The City. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/03/02/racial-gap-nyc-jails-got-worse/>.



New York City Council Budget Hearing Committee on Public Safety

Testimony of: The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, Bronx, NY 10463

Submitted by: Catherine Mykytiuk, Changing Futures Program Director

Hearing Date: 3/11/25

Dear Chair Yusef Salaam and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Catherine Mykytiuk and I am the Changing Futures Program Director at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC), a 51 year old settlement house in the northwest Bronx that serves 6,500 children, youth, and families every year. Our mission is to embrace and elevate our community - from cradle through career - to develop passions and potential and build durable pathways to purpose, prosperity and wellbeing.

KHCC is embedded in the Bronx with multiple entry points, like our food pantry, ESOL classes, case management services, and afterschool programs. As such, KHCC is best positioned to reach and support families impacted by sexual violence who may not otherwise access services. Our Changing Futures Program is one of the only free long term therapy service providers located in the Bronx that specializes in child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence regardless of immigration status and insurance coverage. In 2024 our Changing Futures Program provided 7407 direct services to 880 individuals.

As a member of the Sexual Assault Initiative, KHCC, along with four other agencies across New York City, elevates voices and advocacy efforts regarding the widespread issue of sexual violence. Sexual violence impacts individuals across all demographics citywide. Tackling it together is necessary and more powerful than only focusing on our own borough or district. On behalf of our communities we are advocating for ongoing attention from the City Council to fund the Sexual Assault Initiative.

Many members of our community do not have access to mental health care, especially specialized trauma treatment. For families that do not have insurance and/or are undocumented, the ability to receive treatment for child sexual abuse, sexual assault, or domestic violence is nearly impossible. By continuing to not require health insurance, the Changing Futures Program staff use participant milestones and progress to determine the length of treatment which is frequently substantially longer than the traditional outpatient clinic model. KHCC provides an opportunity for families to receive free long-term treatment and services that are both intensive and individualized.

The Changing Futures Program aims to help participants exhibit reduced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, increased coping skills, and a return toward normative development. The Changing Futures Program provides interventions for children and youth, and the family as a whole, recognizing that abuse is often an intergenerational pattern. We partner with non-offending parents and guardians through one-on-one sessions, family therapy, and parenting groups to assist them in breaking the cycle of abuse and violence. Additionally, we work with an increasing number of adult survivors of child abuse. The Changing Futures Program's mission is to help trauma and abuse survivors and their families stabilize, heal, and thrive in the context of a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Our vision is to reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence in Bronx communities.

KHCC has operated a New York State Department of Health Rape Crisis Program for several years. Presently KHCC is the only New York State Department of Health Rape Crisis Program located in the Bronx. Our certified advocates receive calls and walk-ins from individuals in various stages of surviving sexual violence. We are seeking additional funding to expand the capacity of our Rape Crisis Program. We have seen an uptick in survivors needing support in the immediate aftermath of an assault, or during the process of trying to leave the perpetrator of abuse. Proposed expansion includes in-person accompaniment to hospitals or police stations for survivors, training for in-house staff, and stronger formal partnership with local hospitals. We have already met with social work and medical staff at local hospitals to learn how our team can support survivors who are arriving in their emergency departments. We are committed to doing everything we can with our team of advocates- who hold roles within KHCC and take on the advocate role as an additional duty. However, we need to hire a full-time dedicated advocate and hope to offer stipends for interns in order to expand our reach.

KHCC is seeking \$625,000 for Trauma & Crisis Intervention & Support. This ask includes:

Sexual Assault Initiative (SAI): \$500,000

Rape Crisis Program: \$65,000

Domestic Violence & Empowerment (DoVE) Initiative: \$60,000

As part of that request, we also want to respectfully request that each member of this committee, especially CM's Ayala, De La Rosa, and Stevens as members of the Bronx Delegation - to please strongly consider and support KHCC's individual requests for discretionary dollars to fill gaps in funding, strengthen and expand programming and ensure we can continue our vital work for Bronx children and youth.

To end my written testimony, I will share one participant's story that highlights the powerful work we do, day in and day out, with your support. JJ lives near KHCC and heard about the food pantry. They began attending weekly and also participated in community events held at KHCC, including our Neighborhood Festival held each summer. JJ would tell friends about KHCC and encourage others to participate. JJ learned of a crisis their neighbor was going through. JJ

brought their neighbor, TH, to KHCC and TH spoke with a Changing Futures Program therapist. TH enrolled in therapy and was assisted with a Universal Screening Form to access case management services at KHCC. TH continues to access trauma therapy to process their childhood and the crisis that occurred. TH continues to overcome barriers and is proud of the progress they have made. TH and their therapist have completed mainly narrative therapy, which includes writing letters to people in their life. TH has written several letters to others who have harmed them. TH reads the letters and then rips them up to symbolize closure.

Thank you very much again for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at the following email if you need more information or have any questions.

Sincerely,
Catherine Mykytiuk
cmykytiuk@khcc-nyc.org

New York City Council Public Safety Committee Budget Hearing

Written Testimony of Alana Sivin
Director, Greater Justice New York
Vera Institute of Justice

March 11, 2025

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

This year's preliminary city budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 includes \$2.87 billion for the DOC (a 9 percent increase from last year's adopted budget) and \$12.4 billion for NYPD (a 4 percent increase).¹ In contrast, despite some large proposed investments in safe haven beds and temporary housing, funding is set to decrease for agencies that deliver safety by providing community-based services to New Yorkers, including the Department of Youth and Community Development (11 percent decrease), Department of Homeless Services (8 percent), Department of Housing Preservation and Development (6 percent), and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (3 percent).²

New York City cannot punish its way to safety. Instead, we must increase funding for supportive housing, a community-based continuum of care for New Yorkers experiencing mental illness, alternatives to incarceration, and reentry services. Contact with law enforcement can increase the likelihood of future criminal behavior, and even one day incarcerated can increase the likelihood of rearrest.³ Rather than overfund agencies that trap New Yorkers in an ongoing cycle of instability, arrest, and incarceration, New York's leaders must invest in evidence-backed services that prevent crime, respond to crisis, and stop violence. These investments are also essential to lowering the jail population on Rikers Island so that it can be closed and replaced with the four smaller, modern borough-based jails.

City leaders must hold NYPD accountable for its budget, particularly its overtime budget. There is a concerning pattern of excess overtime spending at NYPD: over the last two fiscal years, for example, overtime spending was \$498 million and \$574 million, respectively. Last fiscal year, NYPD's overspending on overtime was three times larger than the Office of Neighborhood Safety's entire FY 2024 budget (\$190 million) for community-based programs that address systemic drivers of crime and violence.⁴ Despite spending \$550

million on uniformed overtime in just the first six months of FY 2025, NYPD has budgeted uniformed overtime for all of FY 2026 at \$487.7 million. Without any plan for how to rein in overtime so significantly, it seems likely that actual NYPD spending next fiscal year will far exceed budgeted levels.

Beyond budget accountability, city leaders must invest in safety services proven to work. To increase safety via the FY 2026 budget, city leaders should invest \$56.1 million in annual funding as follows:

- **\$4.8 million for Justice-Involved Supportive Housing (JISH).** Also, reissue the request for proposals for new units with higher service funding levels to enable service providers to create and maintain 380 additional JISH units, bringing the total number of units to 500. The city should baseline them in their own unit of appropriation within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to increase budget accountability.
- **\$22 million for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** a 50 percent increase in IMT funding that will help to clear the waitlist of people seeking vital mental health support.
- **\$7 million for Forensic Assertive Community treatment (FACT) teams by,** a 50 percent increase that will enable more justice-involved New Yorkers with mental health needs to access care.
- **\$8 million to restore slated cuts to reentry services** that help New Yorkers returning from incarceration find stable housing, employment, and mental health and substance use treatment.
- **\$3.8 million to restore slated cuts for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs)** to enhance and support the use of ATIs citywide.
- **\$4.5 million for adequately paid peer specialists** to staff mental health and crisis response teams.
- **\$6 million for four new crisis respite centers,** two of which must be opened by the end of 2025 per legislation passed in 2023.⁵ These centers provide up to 28 days of housing and care for people experiencing mental health crises.

Through this \$56.1 million investment, the city can increase safety for less than 6 percent of the \$954.7 million that NYPD spent on uniformed overtime last year.⁶

By investing more in comprehensive, community-based programs that prevent crime before it happens rather than doubling down on punishment afterward, city leaders can improve safety for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me at asivin@vera.org if the Vera Institute of Justice may provide further support.

¹ All budget numbers in this brief provided by the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO), shared with the authors throughout January and February 2025 and on file with the authors. Vera used data from IBO to have the most up-to-date numbers; for more information, contact Benjamin Heller at bheller@vera.org. Note that all Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 preliminary and FY 2025 adopted departmental budget totals include fringe benefits, pension fund contributions, and debt service. See New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2026: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf>; and OMB, *The City of New York Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2025: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt24/erc6-24.pdf>.

² Alice Gainer, "New \$650 Million Plan to Address NYC's Mentally Ill Homeless Unveiled by Mayor Eric Adams," CBS News, January 15, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/bridge-to-home-nyc-mentally-ill-homeless-plan>.

³ Juan Del Toro, Tracey Lloyd, Kim S Buchanan, et al., "The Criminogenic and Psychological Effects of Police Stops on Adolescent Black and Latino Boys," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116, no. 17 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808976116>; Abigail Novak and Shelby Gilbreath, "Police Stops and Subsequent Delinquency and Arrest: Race and Gender Differences," *Justice Quarterly* 40, no. 7 (2023), 910-949, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2235416>; and Core Correctional Solutions, *The Hidden Costs of Pretrial Detention Revisited* (Houston, TX: Arnold Ventures, 2022), <https://perma.cc/4UQV-4S4Q>.

⁴ IBO budget data, January 2025.

⁵ Caroline Lewis, "Deadlines for New Community-Based Mental Health Services Pass the NYC Council," *Gothamist*, July 14, 2023, <https://gothamist.com/news/deadlines-for-new-community-based-mental-health-services-pass-the-nyc-council>.

⁶ IBO budget data, January 2025.



**Testimony of Meg Egan, CEO of the Women's Prison Association
Committee on Public Safety Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 11, 2025**

Good afternoon, my name is Meg Egan, and it is my great honor and privilege to lead the Women's Prison Association. Chair Salaam and the rest of the members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Public Safety Committee today.

Throughout its 180-year history WPA is a force for change, challenging the systemic inequities that criminalize and marginalize women, particularly Black and brown women, at disproportionate rates. For these women, incarceration is not merely a consequence of a single event but the result of compounding systemic failures: poverty, housing instability, trauma, and lack of opportunity.

The harms and failures of Rikers Island are real. The cost to families, communities, and the city is immeasurable. Mothers are separated from children. Communities lose contributors. The cycle of inequity perpetuates and deepens. But what if there was a different way? A way that prioritized prevention, provided support, and treated justice as an opportunity for restoration rather than punishment? WPA envisions that path forward.

By meeting women where they are, WPA fosters trust, connection, and agency, empowering each individual to reclaim her future. Rooted in New York City, WPA serves as a lifeline for women navigating reentry, working alongside them to dismantle the structural barriers that have kept them in the margins for too long.

There are just over 400 women held on Rikers Island right now. We believe that together with our partners, we can develop the services and support to make the community the public safety-minded default, rather than Rikers Island. To realize that vision, the city must not just restore the funding currently cut; \$3.8m from ATI programs and \$8m from reentry programs but expand these essential and effective programs. Our work will center on the following priorities to develop the infrastructure of services to meaningfully address the compounding system failures that diminish safety.

Alternatives to Detention and Incarceration

WPA is working to expand diversion programs such as supervised release, bail reform, and gender-responsive specialty courts. These interventions target women before incarceration, addressing the systemic factors—poverty, housing instability, and trauma—that disproportionately affect women of color.

Reentry Ecosystems

For women returning to their communities, WPA offers holistic support: safe housing, clinical care, and employment programs that foster independence and stability. This ecosystem approach reduces recidivism and strengthens communities.



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

Policy Advocacy for Systemic Reform

Drawing from decades of frontline experience, WPA champions policy changes to reduce the criminalization of poverty and expand access to community-based support. By embedding equity in the justice system, these reforms create scalable, systemic change.

To accomplish these goals, we are seeking funding in the following areas:

1. ATI/Reentry Coalition Funding - \$1,095,200

The Coalition's community-based alternatives to punitive systems lead to lower incarceration rates in New York City and provide individuals and communities that have been disproportionately harmed by mass incarceration in New York with pathways to healing and prosperity. This funding and this work provide WPA with the foundation upon which we can build our holistic approach.

2. Speaker's Initiative Funding - \$200,000

WPA is seeking funding to layout a clear, practical pathway to making incarceration obsolete in New York City. This funding will allow us to strengthen our partnerships while identifying gaps and developing pilot services to address those gaps.

3. Mental Health for Vulnerable Populations Funding - \$200,000

We are seeking funding to provide robust clinical care to our clients. We see clinical, behavioral health care as essential service for our clients regardless of where they are in the criminal legal process. These services will improve outcomes and improve public safety.

4. Discharge Planning Funding - \$1,000,000

With this funding WPA will develop a robust discharge planning infrastructure to ensure that planning begins the moment a person sets foot on Rikers Island. That initial work can support both long-term planning. It can also support, where appropriate, a short-term plan for a motion to reconsider bail and a release into an alternative to detention or incarceration program.

Our vision is to more systematically shift resources from punishment to prevention, addressing the root causes of incarceration. In doing so, WPA will break barriers, shatter systems, and reshape societal norms to significantly reduce the number of women incarcerated in New York City. We will also significantly increase the opportunity, financial security, and stability for the women, their families, their communities and our city. At WPA we believe that the women we serve are more than a number and more than their past—they are unique individuals with immense potential to help shape our community for a better tomorrow.

Please contact me by email, megan@wpaonline.org or by phone at [REDACTED] with any questions.

**New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Public Safety
Written Testimony of Youth Represent
March 11, 2025**

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

Thank you to Chair Salaam, Committee members, and staff for the opportunity to testify today about the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

We wish to highlight that the appendix to this testimony includes copies of spoken testimonies given on behalf of Youth Represent by Jalyll Wright (Appendix A) and Glen Williams (Appendix B), two young people impacted by the criminal legal system in New York City. Both highlight their personal and traumatic histories interacting with the youth justice system. **They ask that, instead of further investment in jails, prisons, youth detention, and probation in NYC, the Council not only funds programs designed for youth coming out of detention, but also funds programming that fosters and cares for each young person BEFORE arrest, including but not limited to sports programs, art programs, mental health programs, political education, and business programs.**

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

Across New York City's five boroughs, an estimated 37,000¹ young New Yorkers—primarily Black and Brown young people—are drawn into the justice system through arrests, convictions, and incarceration. This is a cycle that will not stop if the City continues to pour money into criminalizing, surveilling, and incarcerating young people before they've had the chance to thrive. Instead, the City needs to continually invest in community-oriented, youth-specific resources and opportunities to keep New York families safe and healthy.

¹"Workbook: NYS Arrests by County." Division of Criminal Justice Services, n.d.
https://mypublicdashboard.ny.gov/t/OJRP_PUBLIC/views/NYSArrestsbyCounty/HistoricalData?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y.

a. The City Must Address the Crisis in New York City Secure Detention with a Comprehensive Decarceration Plan

At the June 2024 Joint Oversight Hearing of the Committees on Criminal Justice and Children & Youth on Coordinating the Administration's Youth Decarceration Plan, Youth Represent and our partner organizations testified that Secure Detention and Specialized Secure Detention numbers had increased, imploring the City to invest in alternatives now. The City did not take action, so we are here before you, a year later, testifying that the youth detention numbers continue to increase and intensify urgent overcrowding concerns.

In December 2024, there were 273 youth detained in Crossroads and Horizons,² NYC's Secure Detention Centers, despite the maximum bed capacity being 212. For over a year, ACS has been operating under a waiver from the Office of Children and Family Services which allows the agency to circumvent the state law that mandates private bedrooms for youth in secure detention. Under this waiver, young people have been sleeping on cots in hallways and classrooms at Horizon and Crossroads. Temporarily adding beds and continually renewing this waiver is a band-aid that does not adequately or sustainably address overcrowding. The time to consider and act on alternatives is now.

The average monthly population of Secure Detention and Specialized Secure Detention increased by 13% from 2023 to 2024. In 2024 60% of youth in secure detention were Black and 31% were Hispanic, as published by NYC's Administration of Children Services Flash Report for 2024. Black and Brown young people are disproportionately impacted by this overcrowding because they are disproportionately represented in NYC's Secure Detention population.

ACS does not provide adequate data to accurately represent the kinds and severity of charges facing young people held in Secure Detention in NYC. More granular data on arrest charges by borough would better guide allocation of resources to specific programs in the places they are most needed. This lack of data obstructs any effort to understand the problem of overcrowding in these facilities and to develop a comprehensive decarceration plan to identify young people in each borough who could be released with supervision or moved to Alternative to Detention (ATD) / Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs while their case is open.

Though ACS has repeatedly stated that 70% of young people in their care are charged with "murder or murder related charges" and that "secure detention no longer holds youth charged with minor charges,"³ the data published by ACS tells a less clear story. For about a third of young people in secure detention in 2024, it is impossible to tell from the data whether they were charged with a misdemeanor or felony; moreover the published data suggests that at least 11 young people held in Secure Detention in 2024 were charged with only a misdemeanor or violation (data pulled from ACS's Detention Demographic Data for FY2024). And for 246 young people (over 32% of the total detained in Crossroads or Horizons in 2024), it is impossible to

² "Flash Report - Monthly Indicators." NYC Administration for Children's Services, January 2025.

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/flashReports/2025/01.pdf>.

³ "TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES." New York City Council, 2024, p. 21.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13181141&GUID=7A055DCF-2604-4026-AD1B-5D1034282D04>.

know whether the top charge was a misdemeanor or felony. We demand adequate and accurate data from ACS to support the effort to depopulate secure detention. To reduce overcrowding and to increase support for these young people, the City urgently needs to create a plan for redirecting eligible young people to non-secure detention and to expand use of supervised or unsupervised release programs.

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

Research from the Sentencing Project lays out a roadmap for effective strategies to reduce youth incarceration and promote public safety and youth development. As we describe below, New York City's excellent youth justice providers already incorporate these strategies into their models, but the City's investment in them is a fraction of what it spends on surveilling, policing, and incarcerating young people.⁴

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

NYC Program Models:

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

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

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

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

⁴ Mendel, Richard. "Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration." The Sentencing Project, June 28, 2023. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/effective-alternatives-to-youth-incarceration/>.

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

NYC Program Models:

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

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

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

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

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

NYC Program Models:

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

4. **Cognitive behavioral therapy plus mentors for youth and young adults** at extreme risk, like the programs offered by Roca, Inc., engage youth and young adults living in violence-torn neighborhoods who are at extreme risk for future incarceration. Roca youth workers provide participants with cognitive behavioral therapy and connect them with education, employment, and other relevant services.
5. **Restorative Justice interventions targeting youth** accused of serious offenses provide an alternative to traditional court. These programs typically involve victims, and they culminate in a conference where victims, accused youth, and caring adults in their lives meet to discuss the harm caused by the offense and craft plans for the youth to “make things right” and to avoid subsequent offending and achieve success.
6. **Wraparound programs assign a care coordinator** to develop individualized plans offering an array of services to assist children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances – sometimes including youth facing serious delinquency charges – who might otherwise be placed into residential facilities.

Many of the pre-existing programming in NYC use a combination of the listed approaches to ATI above. These strategies are already being implemented by CURE violence programs, reentry and legal services providers, and other programs that serve system-involved youth. These programs include: exalt, Drive Change, CASES, We Build the Block, Fortune, Osborne, Youth Justice Network, YouthBuild, Summer Youth Employment Program, among others.

The city must expand investments in this continuum of services for court-involved youth to decrease reliance on secure detention. This includes:

1. **Increased funding for alternative to incarceration, alternative to detention, and supervised release programs available in the youth parts and family court in all five boroughs.** Resources are not just needed to execute programs, but for court liaisons to work with young people, defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges to connect young people to appropriate programs. Resources are needed to increase capacity and the length of programming for young people with more complex needs. And funding streams must be flexible so that young people can access the programs that they need, regardless of what court they are in and the posture of the case.
2. **Prevention should always be the first choice.** Funding streams but be flexible enough to serve youth and connect them to services before arrest, especially mentoring, education, enrichment. The City must coordinate across agencies (DYCD, DOP, ACS, MOCJ, DOE) to ensure robust resources and opportunities for youth. In New York City and nationally, Black students are suspended at 3-4 times the rate of their white peers and are more likely to experience disciplinary responses that involve the criminal justice

system.⁵ Specific interventions and resources should be available to any student facing school suspension to ensure they continue their education.

The key finding of the Sentencing Project's research is that:

*Expanding the use of these programs is necessary for youth justice systems to reduce overreliance on incarceration. However, to make a meaningful difference, these programs **must be embedded in youth justice systems that strive to steer youth away from more intensive court supervision at every stage of the process** and that explore all available options to keep young people at home and in their communities. Youth justice systems must also make concerted efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in youth confinement.*

In the end, the most essential ingredient for reducing overreliance on youth incarceration will be a determination to seize every opportunity to keep young people living safely at home with their parents and families, in their schools and communities.⁶

Investing in a robust continuum of services must be complemented by extensive reforms to NYC and NYS youth justice systems to reduce the city and state's overreliance on incarceration and detention programs. These reforms include:

- **Passage of #ErasetheDatabase (Int 0798 - Stevens)**
A local law that would abolish the NYPD's criminal group database and prohibit the establishment of a successor database to reduce racial profiling and criminalization of Black and Brown people in NYC's most under-resourced and over-policed neighborhoods.
- **Passage of the Youth Justice & Opportunities Act (A5293 - Walker; S4330 - Myrie)**
State legislation that would expand alternatives to incarceration, diversion, and immediate record sealing for young people who are arrested in New York. It recognizes that emerging adults—young people ages 18 to 25—have unique needs and tremendous potential. Rather than punishing risk-taking and mistakes with harsh sentencing and the barriers that accompany an adult criminal conviction, YJ&O provides for effective, age-appropriate interventions to move

⁵ Lissy, Dr. Rachel. "Intended Consequences and Explicit Bias: The Roots of Racialized Disproportionality in NYC Discipline Policy | NYU Steinhardt." Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/intended-consequences-and-explicit-bias-roots-racialized-disproportionality-ny-c>.

⁶ Mendel, "Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration."

young people out of the criminal legal system and into education, stability, and economic opportunity.

- **The passage of #Right2RemainSilent: Children's Early Access to Counsel Legislation (A2620 - Hevesi / S878A - Bailey)**
State legislation that would protect children's right to remain silent by creating a non-waivable requirement for consultation with a lawyer for children under 18 before questioning by police.
 - **The passage of the Youth Justice Innovation Fund (A767 - Solages / S643 - Cleare)**
The Youth Justice Innovation Fund would direct \$50 million to community-based organizations to provide a continuum of services from prevention, early intervention, to alternatives to detention, placement and incarceration for youth aged 12 through 25. The Innovation Fund builds on successful state-wide efforts like Project RISE, which has brought over \$30 million to communities to combat gun violence through public health strategies, including credible messenger and violence interruption programs.
- b. The Administration Has Failed to Take Steps to Access Critical Raise the Age Funds from New York State

Last fall marked five years since Raise the Age was first implemented across New York State, ending a shameful chapter in our history of prosecuting 16-and 17-year olds as adults regardless of the offense. Prior to the passing of this legislation, thousands of 16-and 17-year-olds were held in dangerous conditions on Rikers Island and other adult jails across the state. Moreover, these youth were systematically locked-out of age-appropriate services in family court programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents and avoid the barriers of an adult criminal record.

Youth crime has consistently decreased since Raise the Age implementation in 2018. In New York City alone, since 2013 there has been a 48% decrease in adolescent arrests for serious offenses. Evidence from implementation across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being.

Despite making up half of the state's youth justice system population, New York City is currently excluded from accessing the Raise the Age funding because the City exceeds the tax cap prescribed by state law. However, it is possible to access this funding by submitting a waiver of hardship, indicating that our city and our programs need the resources that are available through the Raise the Age law. New York City accounts for half of the state's youth justice system population and should be able to access more funding. However, Mayor Adams has yet to apply for the waiver of hardship, despite the administration's claim that the current fiscal cliff necessitates drastic cuts to many of the supportive services and programs that are vital to New York City's youth and families.

2. #CLOSERIKERS

At a cost of over half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety. In addition to exposing people to rampant abuse and violence, Rikers Island wastes resources that are desperately needed for housing, treatment, education, and other investments. Mayor Adams' proposed budget continues to misappropriate funds that are needed for real public safety investments by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs - including those that serve New York's most vulnerable young people - and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. These resources are essential for New Yorkers of all ages and are especially crucial for young people. As of this week over 1,300 young people aged 18-25 are being held at Rikers.

Preliminary budget analysis:

- **DOCs budget is still bloated**, with the Mayor proposing to spend \$2.87 billion on jail operations alone in FY2026. In addition, the administration is planning either to continue overusing incarceration or to employ almost twice as many correctional officers as people in custody by FY2028. Either option makes no sense, morally or financially.
- **Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded**: the administration agreed to yet has not followed through on establishing 380 more units of Justice Involved Supportive Housing, a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings.
 - The Close Rikers Plan also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed with a serious mental illness has increased by more than 60% since January 2022 without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care.
- **Reentry and alternative to incarceration programs face cuts**: The administration is proposing \$8M in cuts to reentry services, while a key commitment in the [plan to Close Rikers](#) was to "Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails," as evidence recommends.⁷
 - The administration is proposing \$3.8 million in cuts to alternative to incarceration programs. Opportunities to divert people from Rikers should be fully utilized, in collaboration with the Jail Population Review Initiative that the Council established last year through Local Law 75-2023. Expanding alternatives to incarceration was also a key commitment in the plan to close Rikers.
- **Jail oversight cuts are proposed**: DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, including [continued illegal use of solitary confinement](#); revelations of [sexual abuse claims on Rikers spanning decades](#); and recent disclosure of [DOC officers "deadlocking" people with severe mental health needs](#). Strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor

⁷ "Successful Reentry: Exploring Funding Models to Support Rehabilitation, Reduce Recidivism." National Conference of State Legislatures, Updated June 21, 2023.
<https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/the-importance-of-funding-reentry-programs>.

proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 30 positions, and cutting BOC's budget by \\$210,418 \(5%\)](#).

In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration. It's time to use our precious resources to fund the things that work.

Priorities for this year's budget to advance the closure of Rikers:

- **Allocate at least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs,** and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
 - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate **\$4.8 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)**, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Allocate \$22M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) teams** and cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
 - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers,** in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- **Fully restore cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice** for ATI (\$3.8M) and reentry (\$8M) programs. The budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) by \$2.4 million to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
- **Fully restore cuts to the Board of Correction and increase their headcount** to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.⁸ The [preliminary budget](#) proposes \$210k in cuts and 5 fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed, not less. Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.⁹
- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.**
 - The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed [5,908 and 1,152 positions were vacant](#).¹⁰ DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the

⁸ Other oversight agencies [like the CCRB](#) have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee.

⁹ The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6M to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute 1% of the currently jail population (6,7000 people)

¹⁰ Per Independent Budget Office

number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies, DOC could realize cost **savings of \$149.6M annually.**¹¹

- **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.¹²

3. Youth Represent: Critical Services for Youth

With support from the New York City Council through the Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative and the Discharge Planning Initiative, Youth Represent provides reentry legal services for young people in their own communities. We are deliberate in serving Black, Latiné, Indigenous, and other youth of color who otherwise would not have access to legal services, while still prioritizing those with criminal legal system involvement. We have also expanded our age range from 24 and under to youth 26 and under. This is in response to growing research that shows our brains continue to develop into the mid-twenties, and addresses the very practical reality that our partner organizations often welcome participants over the age of 24.

We focus on young people living within New York City's five boroughs and are committed to providing inclusive and gender-affirming services to all youth. In 2024, 88% of our clients are people of color, including 49% Black, 26% Latinx, 6% multiracial, and 7% Asian. Our clients have an average age of 23, with nearly 20% being non-U.S. citizens and another 20% living in subsidized housing. Alarming, only 10% are employed full-time, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive support. These statistics highlight the significant barriers our youth face in achieving stability and self-sufficiency, emphasizing the critical role Youth Represent plays in empowering marginalized young people to overcome systemic challenges and build brighter futures.

Youth Represent: City Council Criminal Justice Programs Initiative Support

City Council funding, through the **Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative** and the **Discharge Planning Initiative**, has allowed us to provide critical legal services and mental health services for youth. This year we have requested an additional \$50,000—for a total request of \$125,000—which would allow us to increase our support for young people under the funding by 50% and respond to the already overwhelming demand we are seeing for our legal and mental health services in neighborhoods with the highest needs level. We hope that you will renew and expand funding for Youth Represent and that you will do so in the context of a just budget—investing in the full range of services and supports that young people and families rely on.

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

¹¹ Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

¹² "Departmental Estimates - Fiscal Year 2026." Offices of Management and Budget, the City of New York, January 2025. https://a860-gpp.nyc.gov/concern/nyc_government_publications/pz50h083q.

Appendix

A. Spoken Testimony of Jalyll Wright

Wassup ya I'm Jalyll better known as Jah. I am a Youth Mentor & leader from Youth Justice Network and I also just became a Youth Committee member at Youth Represent. Additionally I am a graduate of the Arches program at YJN which I completed after I came home on bail. I've struggled, bled sweat, prayed & cried to get where I'm at today. If it wasn't for the support, love & faith from my people believing in me I wouldn't be where i'm at today, before Arches & Youth Represent I didn't have any opportunities. I didn't know my rights, didn't know my worth or my purpose. The problem is we're poorly educated on life. We are so stuck on survival that we don't know how to live normally. That's how it is for most young men like me but it shouldn't be like that.

\The problems that we're seeing today in my community are lack of education, lack of support, the environment youth come from, poverty, and racial profiling. All these things lead youth to jail. We put too much money into detention centers and jail for youth. We fix this program by investing in the youth's future and listening to what we have to say. The city can do that by passing a budget that funds more programs. Programs that actually work and that young people like myself actually want to see. Programs that we need to invest in that fix the problem are boxing programs, artistic programs, mental health programs, political education and business programs.

Another way to fix the issues we face is investing in more organizations that do know your rights training. This is crucial because when young people know their rights, they can defend themselves in situations where they haven't done anything wrong but are being profiled based on their appearance, skin tone, how they dress, how they walk.

Where I'm from does not define who I am but where I'm from made me who I am today. That's the same for a lot of other young people like me in New York. They are worthy of support just like me, not incarceration. Thank you for listening.

B. Spoken Testimony of Glen Williams

My name is Glen Williams, I am 25 years old. I grew up in the Bronx with a single mother with 8 siblings. Growing up was not easy and while I tried to help take care of my siblings, there were times when I was unable to stay at my house. I had to constantly overcome obstacles to preserve myself for better things. I was always taught to be polite and treat others with dignity. But like many young men in this city, I found myself caught in the system, facing consequences for mistakes I made in my youth.

When I was 20 years old, I was sentenced to three years of probation after serving 45 days for a misdemeanor conviction. The harsh reality of the NYC court system and the probation process easily pushed me further into a life of frustration and failure. It hurt me mentally, physically, and made me all around discouraged. Between being denied by employers, being homeless, and living in fear of being arrested again, I felt defeated.

The extended probation kept me in a state of constant stress and fear that I could easily be brought back behind bars. I had to manage not falling backwards in society, and I constantly grappled with the difficulty of not being able to get a job because of my record. For three years, I was rejected from every employer I applied to except 2 jobs. The frustration of being denied, over and over again, chipped away at my sense of self-worth, made me feel discouraged, and messed with my character.

Despite successfully completing my sentence, I continued to have encounters with the police, in which they would use excessive force against me. I have both experienced first hand and witnessed how the police are overly aggressive with black men that look like me and how they treat us badly in our own neighborhoods by physically and sexually harassing us and then claiming it is for their job.

What helped me move forward and past involvement with the criminal justice system was my involvement in numerous programs and resources that have changed my perspective. These re-entry programs and resources include programs like Youth Wrap, the Health People, Bronx Connect, Youth Represent, and Drive Change, which were all life changing for me. The programs I named above helped me get different certificates, such as my OSHA license, food handlers license, and connected to therapy, food pantries, and financial support. These programs eased the stress of everyday survival. The programs connected me to stipend programs that paid me and taught me how to properly interview at a job and have job placement services, as well as start having an income.

Therapy helped me overcome the mental health challenges I was dealing with and even ones I did not realize I was dealing with due to my involvement in the criminal justice system and abuse I endured growing up from my family. Health People, Youth Represent, and RiseBoro have provided me with mentorship and social worker support that has helped me learn how to make better choices and conduct myself in certain situations.

In addition to programs needing more funding, there needs to be more resources for supportive housing. More recently, as I was living in the shelter system in NYC, I often had interactions with the police simply because I was residing at a shelter or because I would have to carry my belongings with me at all times. This would result in me getting pulled back into the system and interrupt the progress I was making in building my life.

It's not just about the probation, itself. It was about the way the jail systems and corrections facilities seemed to trap me in a cycle where the consequences felt disproportionate to my actions even after probation. I am living proof that funding programs can help people avoid the system, because once I was connected to programming I began thriving while continuing to fight the uphill battle I continue to face due to my single conviction from when I was a young adult.

I'm living proof that the focus should be less on harsh sentences and more on rehabilitation and opportunities to reintegrate into society. The idea that increased funding can go towards additional police forces and correctional agencies only perpetrates this endless cycle of punishment. Young people should not have to get arrested and be on probation to get access to the resources and opportunities they need. Investing in people, through the programs that help create real opportunities to turn lives around is crucial and should be the main focus. I think the police, probation, and prison systems are overfunded and that only sustains the problem. Instead money should be redirected to programs that provide real tangible support, guidance, and give me, and others, a chance for a future. Endless punishment for young people needs to end and access to programming is crucial to that.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF CORINTHIAN BLACK

New York City Council Committee on Public Safety Preliminary Budget Hearing March 11, 2025

Good afternoon to all, and thank you to Council Committee Chair Salaam and Committee Members for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Corinthian Black. I am a former gang member and an individual who was known to carry a loaded firearm.

Today you see someone who is employed full time as a community navigator with the Atlas Hope program partnered with The Fortune Society, a member of the Legal Action Center Youth Advisory Board, and an Emerging Adult for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and much more.

I am also a product of an ATI Program. The name alone, "Alternative to Incarceration," speaks volumes. That should be the staple within our communities.

I support law and order, but prison is not the only solution. The ideology of the correctional system is based upon punishment not rehabilitation. When you are going through intake they ask if you are a part of a gang and use that information plus the classification of your crime to place you into a high or low security facility. If you have underlying needs such as mental health, substance use, etc, you just have to pray that the facility you are assigned to actually has the services you need. If the law deems an individual a high risk to society, you are now removing them from society and placing them into an environment where they have to become more of a risk to themselves and others in order to survive.

Some people say if you "did the crime you must do the time." There are other ways you can do the time, such as ATI programs. I was mandated into Fortune Society for a whole year. If that's not paying the time then I do not know what is.

The program wasn't easy. At first I was skeptical of Fortune Society. I had this idea that Fortune Society was just like Rikers Island: different individuals from different walks of life in one space. These individuals may have gun cases like me and I do not know who I might see from outside interactions.

But after a few weeks I started to open up because Fortune was my safe haven in a sense. These Thinking for a Change and Anger Management classes were very therapeutic. I learned things about myself during my mandate that I've never known before and I also learned that there are different solutions to conflict. Masculinity is a hell of a thing. I thought walking away or diffusing a situation made you a punk but in my anger management classes, I learned that it requires more discipline as a man to walk away and it's okay to diffuse a solution. I received this information from individuals who did 20-30 years in prison so it made me more receptive to the information relayed to me. That's why I

believe having more credible messengers and mentors for the youth is essential. ATI programs provide those mentors and credible messengers.

I learned that no decision I make solely affects me, which is an important lesson that I still incorporate into my everyday life. Not only did I learn life lessons throughout the program, but I was also empowered by Fortune. They saw a potential in me that I didn't see in myself. They created the first ever "client of the month" award just for me. They exposed me to boardroom settings with politicians and funders. The Vice President of the program brought me on a business trip to Chicago that ultimately resulted in me developing my own curriculum for the youth with support from the Annie E. Casey foundation.

Now I'm a provider working for Atlas Hope, a program that serves high risk individuals 25-40 years old. I build trust with them and enroll them into our services. Working in this program is ultimately motivating the same individuals who I was in the classroom with months ago. Now they see me in the hallways like "bro you really did it, I want to work now, I want to work for Fortune," and now I'm able to point them in the direction of employment services.

If you think of the landscape of the 5 boroughs and canvas the local areas especially in Bronx and Brooklyn, all you see is smoke shops, liquor stores, and Kennedy Fried Chicken on every block, which ultimately is promoting an unhealthy lifestyle that can contribute to crime rates. In a perfect world, I would suggest we place enough ATI programs on each block instead of the smoke shops. That would give justice-impacted individuals a greater chance to make the best decisions for themselves and their community. If a youth is constantly walking or driving past an ATI program, they may ask "what is this?" Then when they are provided the information, they may realize it is something that they need, or that someone they know needs. And that's one less person committing illegal activity.

Instead of sitting back and watching our youth be in a position to likely commit crime, serve a 10-plus year sentence, and then try to provide them with reentry services, let's be proactive, and save them while they're young.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.

Testimony of Kevin Ly

Before the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety

Chair Yusef Salaam

March 11, 2025

Good morning, Chair Salaam and members of the Committee. My name is Kevin Ly, and I am a lifelong New Yorker residing in Forest Hills, Queens, with my wife and our two young children, ages 5 and 3. As a concerned parent and citizen, I am here to address the pressing issues of public safety in our city, particularly focusing on the subway system and our public schools. Despite official reports suggesting improvements, the lived experiences of many New Yorkers tell a different story—one that reflects ongoing concerns about safety in our daily lives.

Subway Safety: A Growing Concern

The subway is the lifeline of our city, yet it has become an environment of lawlessness, fear, and unpredictability. While official statistics indicate a decrease in some crimes, the reality is that people do not feel safe taking public transportation, especially at night.

- **Five repeat offenders with nearly 600 arrests between them** were recently apprehended, underscoring how our transit system has become a haven for criminals who exploit weak enforcement policies.
- Despite claims that crime is down, **murders in the subway have surged by 60% this year alone**—a horrifying statistic that proves more must be done.

The current limited deployment of law enforcement is not enough. What we need is a **24/7 presence of both the NYPD and the National Guard throughout the subway system**—not just during peak hours, not just after high-profile incidents, but **every single hour of every single day**. The city must stop treating transit safety as a part-time concern and commit to **round-the-clock protection for all riders**.

School Safety: Protecting Our Children

Our public schools should be safe havens for learning, yet the reality is far from that. **In the 2023-2024 school year alone, nearly 4,000 weapons were seized in NYC public schools, including guns, knives, and brass knuckles.** Parents should not have to worry if their children will make it home safely from school.

The Reality on the Ground

While city officials claim things are improving, the reality is that people are scared. The combination of repeat offenders, weak enforcement, and reactive—not proactive—safety measures is failing New Yorkers.

A Call to Action

I urge the Council to:

1. **Deploy the NYPD and the National Guard in the subway system 24/7.** Anything less leaves riders vulnerable to crime and violence.
2. **Strengthen School Security.** Increase funding for school safety initiatives, hire more trained school safety agents, and ensure real protections for students and staff.

3. **Promote Transparency.** Provide clear and accurate crime data to the public instead of downplaying real safety concerns.

We cannot allow city officials to gaslight New Yorkers into believing things are safe when they are not. It is time for bold, immediate action to restore public safety in the subway, in our schools, and across our city.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ly

Forest Hills, NY 11375



**Testimony for Preliminary Budget Hearing – Public Safety
March 11, 2025**

Submitted by Melissa Vergara, member of Freedom Agenda

Good morning, Members of the City Council and the Public Safety Committee. I am here today to urge you to reconsider the city's budget priorities in the name of true public safety. Specifically, I call on you to invest in strong, evidence-based alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs rather than further increasing the budgets of the NYPD and District Attorneys. The proposed \$12 million in budget cuts to these crucial programs is a step in the wrong direction and will only perpetuate cycles of harm and instability in our communities.

The reality is that jail and prison do not provide effective mental health treatment. Incarceration only exacerbates existing conditions, deepening trauma and making reintegration into society even more difficult. Research has consistently shown that individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders are disproportionately incarcerated rather than treated. New York City must stop prioritizing punitive measures and instead fund community-based alternatives that offer mental health support, substance use treatments, stable housing, and job training—solutions that have been proven to reduce recidivism and promote real public safety.

We cannot ignore the evidence. It has been proven that alternatives to incarceration and re-entry programs significantly reduce repeat offenses and improve long-term outcomes for participants. Reentry programs provide vital services that help individuals successfully transition back into their communities, reducing reincarceration. Cutting funding for these programs not only undermines public safety but also ignores the cost savings they generate. It costs over \$507,000 per year to keep one person in Rikers Island, and the mayor has budgeted \$150 million to hire 1,100 more correction officers in the coming year. That same money could be used to fund treatment and supportive services that prevent incarceration in the first place.

My son, a 23-year-old with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a mental health diagnosis, spent 2.5 years on Rikers Island without receiving adequate mental health care. His crises were misunderstood and criminalized rather than treated, leading to repeated use of force by correctional officers who lacked the proper training to de-escalate situations, often escalating them. He was transferred to Upstate Correctional Facility and faced even greater trauma, including physical violence - abuse from officers. Now, as he prepares for reentry, his parole officer has rejected his return home to family and is instead pushing for him to be placed in a shelter—further destabilizing his transition and denying him the support he desperately needs. His story is not unique—it is the reality for thousands of New Yorkers caught in a system that punishes rather than heals.

This is not justice. This is not public safety. Public safety is a city where individuals experiencing a mental health crisis are met with trained professionals instead of police officers who lack the necessary expertise. Public safety is ensuring that people have access to housing, job training, and mental health/substance use treatment so they do not end up incarcerated in the first place. Public safety is investing in people, not punishment.

New York City must not only reject these proposed cuts but must go further in funding proven alternatives that promote healing and rehabilitation. I urge the Council to stand firm in demanding a budget that reflects our values—a budget that prioritizes care over criminalization, healing over harm, and prevention over punishment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Tisch, Police Commissioner

Address: 1PP

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tania Kinsella, First Deputy Commissioner

Address: 1PP

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristine Ryan, Deputy Commissioner for

Address: Management and Budget

I represent: NYPD

Address: 1PP

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Cherber, Deputy Commissioner for

Address: Legal Matters

I represent: NYPD

Address: 1 PP

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSEPH KENNY

Address: 1 Police Plaza

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-11-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TARAK Rahman

Address: 1 PD

I represent: NYPD- DAO

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aristleyda Skinner

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 5911, DC37

Address: (911 operators)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Olivia Duong

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 3778, DC37

Address: (NYPD Technical Professional Employees)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Glenys Rivera

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: 2nd Vice-President, Local 372, DC37

Address: (School Crossing Guards)

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Constance Lesold

Address: [REDACTED] Bklyn, NY 11238

I represent: (Temporary)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: March 11, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: [REDACTED] Jamaica NY 11436

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan Kirk - CASES

Address: _____

I represent: Nathaniel ACT, ATI Coalition

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hadeel Mishal

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence

Address: Project

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/12/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Giles Maleckel

Address: New York, NY 10021

I represent: CASES

Address: 151 Lawrence St. Brooklyn, NY 10014

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANDREW ANDREW

Address: _____

I represent: SELF

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 03/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan Marcelin

Address: NY, NY 10014

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darren Mack

Address: 40 Rector, NY, NY 10006

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DD. Mohammed Ali, CHAIR ^{INTERIM}

Address: 1000 CHURCH STREET, 10TH FLOOR, NYC

I represent: CCRB

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonathan Darshe, Executive Director

Address: _____

I represent: CCRB

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alvin Bragg, District Attorney

Address: _____

I represent: Manhattan District Attorney

Address: 1 Hogan Place

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darcel D. Clark

Address: Bronx DA NY 10457

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics
Address: Prosecutor

I represent: _____

Address: 80 Centre St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Clinton

Address: _____

I represent: District Attorney Michael McMahon

Address: 130 Stuyvesant Place

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC GONZALEZ

Address: 350 Jay Street

I represent: Brooklyn District Attorney

Address: 350 Jay Street, BKLYN, NY 11201

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yvette Chen

Address: _____

I represent: The Center for NYC Neighborhoods

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DA Melinda Katz

Address: 125-01 Qns Blvd. Kew Gardens

I represent: Queens DA's Office

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MEGAN

Address: [REDACTED] NEW YORK 10001

I represent: WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LISA SCHREIBER BERSDORF

Address: [REDACTED] Bklyn 11201

I represent: Brooklyn Defense Service

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Corinthian Black

Address: _____

I represent: the self (work for Fortune)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rob DeLeon

Address: _____

I represent: FORTUNE SOCIETY

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jane Fox

Address: _____

I represent: UAW Local 2325 / Association of Legal Advocates & Attorneys

Address: 50 Broadway Ste 1601 NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANDREW SANTA ANA

Address: _____

I represent: ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION

Address: 110 WALL ST NY NY 10005

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TINA LUONGO

Address: 49 Thomas Street

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: Same address

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Piyali Basak

Address: Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem

I represent: 5

Address: 317 Lenox Ave, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juval Scott

Address: 360 E. 161st St. Bronx, NY

I represent: The Bronx Defenders

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hailey Nolasco (Nolasco)

Address: 520 8th Avenue

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: _____

Public
Testimony

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony Martone

Address: 118-21 Queens Blvd, F.H.N.Y. 11375

I represent: Queens Defenders

Address: SMR

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deanna Logan, Director

Address: _____

I represent: MOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Candice Julien, Chief Operating Officer

Address: _____

I represent: MOCJ

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Fiato, Chief Financial Officer

Address: _____

I represent: MOCJ

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nora Daniel, Chief of Staff

Address: _____

I represent: MOCJ

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: William John

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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