

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

----- X

April 13, 2021
Start: 11:09 a.m.
Recess: 1:07 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 2)

B E F O R E: Deborah Rose
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret Chin
Mathieu Eugene
Farah Louis
Bill Perkins
Kevin Riley

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Alexander Perez, Member
Youth Action Board

Maddox Guerilla
Youth Action Board

Randy Scott, Assistant Commissioner for
Vulnerable and Special Needs
Youth Division
DYCD

Tracy Thorne, Director
Runaway Homeless Youth

Pascale Larosiliere
Good Shepherd Services

Ramon Leclerc, New York City Resident

Jamie Powlovich, Executive Director
Coalition for Almost Youth

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud recording in
3 progress.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording to the cloud
5 all set.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Back up is rolling.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. And you may
8 start with your opening statement, Sergeant Biondo.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and welcome
10 to today's remote New York City Council hearing for
11 the Committee on Youth Services. At this time, would
12 all panelists please turn on their video for
13 verification purposes? Once again, all panelists,
14 please turn on your video for verification purposes.
15 To minimize disruptions, please place all electronic
16 devices to vibrate or silent mode. If you would like
17 to submit testimony, please send via email to
18 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Again, that is
19 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Thank you for your
20 cooperation. Chair Rose, we are ready to begin.

21 [gavel]

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, sergeant-at-
23 arms, and thank you all for joining our virtual
24 hearing today on this very important issue: the youth
25 count. Good morning. My name is Debbie Rose and I

2 am the Chair of the New York City Council's Committee
3 on Youth Services. Today, the Committee and Youth
4 Services is conducting an oversight hearing on youth
5 count which is administered by the New York City
6 Department of You think Community Development. I
7 would like to recognize that we have been joined by
8 my Council colleagues, Council member Eugene, Council
9 member Louis, and Council member Riley. At today's
10 hearing, the Committee on Youth Services will examine
11 the youth count methodology, planning, process, and
12 resources and ways to improve it to Chair a more
13 accurate estimate of unsheltered homeless youth in
14 New York City. The committee will also explore how
15 Youth Count was adapted in the environment of Covid
16 19 outbreak and we will solicit feedback from
17 advocates, providers, and members of the affected
18 population about the issues plaguing Youth Count and
19 how to address them. Every year, the city can tax a
20 citywide point in time count of homeless adults,
21 youth, and families in New York based on the
22 guidelines that were issued by the United States
23 Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD.
24 The homeless outreach population estimate, or HOPE,
25 is used to gauge the size of the unsheltered homeless

2 population in New York City, including homeless youth
3 under the age of 24. Youth Count serves as a
4 supplement to HOPE to capture unsheltered homeless
5 youth who were not counted in the HOPE count. The
6 resulting numbers are then used as a base to
7 determine how much funding is to be allocated towards
8 runaway and homeless youth services. A social
9 service sector that is described by advocates as
10 starved and grossly under resourced. Given the
11 crucial role that Youth Count results play in the
12 decisions regarding resources and services typically
13 find it is hard provided to an extremely vulnerable
14 and disproportionately traumatized population,
15 unsheltered homeless youth, it is imperative to
16 ensure that such estimates are as accurate as
17 possible and to do that, it is necessary to make sure
18 that every annual youth count is effective. This is
19 even more critical in the environment of Covid 19
20 outbreak which exacerbated poverty and homelessness
21 in New York City while simultaneously producing even
22 higher barriers to the resources and services by
23 means of fiscal deficits and the pivot it to remote
24 base activities in so many areas of daily life. And,
25 yet, from 2015, when the United States interagency

2 Council on Homelessness mandated Youth Count, the
3 citywide numbers of identified unsheltered homeless
4 youth ranged from the low of 152 in 2016 to a high of
5 265 youth in 2017. These estimates stand in stark
6 contrast to the of unsheltered homeless youth that
7 the providers encounter in the course of their
8 provision of services and outreach work. Admittedly,
9 these low numbers are, in part, due to Hudson
10 restrictive definition of being unsheltered, however,
11 advocates and providers also point to that Youth
12 Count been under resourced and understaffed and a
13 sign that insufficiently high priority by the DYCD,
14 as well as being inadequately planned and
15 methodologically weak. To address these highlighted
16 issues and, therefore, ensure that runaway and
17 homeless youth in New York City have adequate access
18 to critical resources and services at an important
19 developmental stage called emerging adulthood and,
20 during one of the most trying points of their lives,
21 the following steps should be taken. One, it is
22 imperative for the next administration to elevate
23 Youth Count, in particular, and the issue of runaway
24 and homeless youth in general to one of its highest
25 priorities because, when we invest in our youth, we

2 invest in our collective better future. Two, it is
3 necessary for the DYCD to reevaluate the resources
4 and staffing that it allocates to Youth Count to
5 ensure that the account is adequately funded and
6 staffed with a sufficient number of people with
7 homeless youth, specifically trauma informed
8 training. Three, do you want ICD should work to
9 strengthen its partnership with the New York City
10 Department of Education in the area of Youth Count
11 because evidence across the nation indicates that a
12 common factor in successful, effective youth count is
13 a strong collaboration with educational systems.
14 Four, DYCD could find ways to incentivize the
15 participation of providers and, most importantly,
16 youth, as both Youth Count surveyors and respondents.
17 Another common factor in successful, affective youth
18 counts. Five, DYCD could work to ensure a greater
19 and more meaningful participation of advocates,
20 providers, and, most critically, youth who live--
21 youth with lived experience of homelessness in all
22 stages of the Youth Count planning, decision, and
23 implementation process, yet another factor which
24 denotes effective youth counts. Six, the DYCD could
25 elevate Youth Count to one of its highest priorities

2 because the resulting numbers will influence the
3 amount of funding allocated to an already starved
4 sector serving an extremely vulnerable and
5 disproportionately traumatized population. And,
6 lastly, DYCD should work to gain greater access for
7 Youth Count surveyors to indoor spaces such as
8 abandoned buildings, 24 our retail establishments,
9 and hospital emergency rooms. Since any annual Youth
10 Count and HOPE are conducted in January on one of the
11 coldest nights of the year when unsheltered homeless
12 youth tend to seek refuge from the cold weather in
13 such locations. In summation, we are here today to
14 examine the Youth Counts methodology, planning
15 process, resources, and ways to improve it to capture
16 a more accurate estimate of unsheltered homeless
17 youth in New York City. We will also explore how
18 Youth Count was adapted in the environment of Covid
19 19, especially given the pivot to the remote base in
20 so many areas of life. In addition, we will hear
21 feedback and experiences of youth providers,
22 advocates, and community members. Moreover, this
23 hearing will aim to produce a resolution calling on
24 the United States Department of Housing and Urban
25 Development to revise this definition of being

2 unsheltered to reflect a multitude of homelessness,
3 experiences, and survival strategies, as well as
4 opposing the use of Youth Count 2017 estimates as the
5 baseline for funding decisions given that current
6 Youth Count methodologies are still in their infancy,
7 still in need of much refinement and considering the
8 implications of that for the estimate accuracy. In
9 closing, we are here today to work cooperatively to
10 ensure that our most vulnerable youth have adequate
11 access to critical resources and services during one
12 of the darkest moments in their lives. I want to
13 thank the staff behind-the-scenes to make sure that
14 this hearing online runs smoothly. I also would like
15 to thank the youth committee staff for their work on
16 this issue. My committee counsel, Amy Briggs,
17 committee policy analyst, Anastasia Samina, financial
18 analyst, Michelle Paragrín, and Elizabeth Arts, and a
19 big thank you to my staff, as well. Isa Cortez,
20 Christian Ravelo, Vince Manani, and my chief of
21 staff, Christine Johnson. And I would like to thank
22 you-- And with that, I would like to acknowledge my
23 colleagues who have joined us today. They are
24 Council member Louis, Council member Eugene, and
25 Council member Riley. I will now turn it over to my

2 committee counsel who will review some procedural
3 items relating to today's hearing. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
5 Rose. I'm Amy Briggs, counsel to the Committee on
6 Youth Services for the New York City Council. I'll
7 be moderating today's hearing and calling panelists
8 to testify. Before we begin, I would like to remind
9 everyone that you will be on mute until I call on you
10 to testify. After you are called, you will be
11 unmuted by the host. Please listen for your name. I
12 will periodically announce who the next panelists
13 will be. Council member questions will be limited to
14 five minutes and Council members, please note that
15 this includes both your questions and the witnesses
16 answer. Please also note that we will allow a second
17 round of questions at today's hearing. These will be
18 limited to two minutes, again, including both your
19 question in the witnesses answer. For public
20 testimony, I will call up individuals in panels.
21 Council members who have questions for a particular
22 panelist should use the raise hand function in Zoom.
23 You will be called on after everyone on that panel
24 has completed their testimony. For public panelists,
25 once I call your name, a member of our staff will

2 unmute you and the sergeant-at-arms will give you the
3 go-ahead to begin speaking after setting the timer.
4 All public testimony will be limited to three
5 minutes. After I call your name, please wait a brief
6 moment for the sergeant-at-arms to announce that you
7 may begin before starting your testimony. I will now
8 call on the following panel of youths with lived
9 experiences of homelessness to testify. Alexander
10 Perez from the Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocate
11 and New York City Youth Action Board member and
12 Maddox Guerilla, Coalition for Homeless Youth
13 Committee coordinator and the New York City Youth
14 Action Board co-coordinator. Alexander Perez, you
15 may begin your testimony.

16 ALEXANDER PEREZ: Good morning. Good
17 morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify
18 today. My name is Alexander Rey Perez and I am a
19 member of the NYC Youth Action Board which is a body
20 of young people with lived experience of homelessness
21 that informs the work of the NYC continuum of care.
22 One of the roles of the YAB is to support the
23 Department of Youth and Community Development with
24 the annual Youth Count. However, this year we
25 limited our involvement due to concerns about the

2 YAB's involvement in the count, as well as concerns
3 about the overall count. I will now read the first
4 half of the letter that the YAB sent to DYCD
5 regarding the 2021 Youth Count.

6 The New York City continuum of care Youth
7 Action Board is writing to strengthen its partnership
8 with the Department of Youth and Community
9 Development, DCYD, and to amplify the growing
10 concerns of the youth and young adults experiencing
11 homelessness that are members of the New York City
12 continuum of care Youth Action Board regarding the
13 youth Count. The YAB hopes that we can work together
14 with DYCD to resolve the ongoing issues related to
15 the YAB's involvement and contribution to the youth
16 moving forward. This letter also serves as a formal
17 notification of the YAB's decision to limit its
18 support of the 2021 Youth Count to the support that
19 the YAB has already given to the DYCD staff in charge
20 of the count. More specifically, attending planning
21 meetings, providing DYCD with feedback and
22 recommendations in the summer facilitating the
23 provider and volunteer training. Therefore, we will
24 not be supporting with the administering of surveys
25 as we did during 2020 Youth Count. Instead, we will

2 have focused our efforts in writing this letter and
3 providing recommendations to DYCD on how to better
4 utilize youth with lived experience in all aspects of
5 the Youth Count the YAB was established in 2017.
6 Since its inception, it has had the honor of
7 providing feedback and, on occasion, technical
8 support to DYCD on the annual runaway and homeless
9 youth Count. This relationship was formalized in
10 2019 when the YAB's contract with the NYC COC
11 specified supporting the youth Count as one of the
12 YAB's special projects. Based on the YAB's
13 experience with the count over the past four years of
14 partnership, the YAB saw fit to evaluate its work
15 with the DYCD under the supervision of the Coalition
16 for Homeless Youth and in collaboration with its
17 stakeholders. This evaluation has found that there
18 continues to be an opportunity for DYCD to advance
19 its investment in authentic partnerships with young
20 people and young adults-- specifically young people
21 and young adults experiencing homelessness or
22 houselessness. Not only in regards to the youth
23 Count, but also in other areas of focus by DYCD.
24 This investment should also result in improved
25 partnership with the YAB and a greater involvement of

2 the YAB in the design and decision-making process
3 with DYCD. The YAB is committed to working equitably
4 and believes no organization is an island. That
5 community inclusion is essential to successful
6 programs, especially the annual Youth Count. Working
7 collaboratively is not only a definition of authentic
8 partnership, but a community centered response
9 supporting this specific issues that youth
10 experiencing homelessness or houselessness regarding
11 services. Thank you for your time. My fellow board
12 member, Maddox, will finish the letter during their
13 testimony. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
16 testimony, Alexander. Maddox Guerilla, you may begin
17 your testimony.

18 MADDOX GUERILLA: Yeah. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to testify today. My name is Maddox
20 Guerilla and I am one of the coordinators of the NYC
21 Youth Action Board. I will now resume reading the
22 letter that the New York City YAB sent to DYCD which
23 includes the request and recommendation that the YAB
24 made to DYCD that they still have not provided

2 written response to, as requested. The letter
3 states:

4 Given the impact of the Youth Count has
5 on the future of runaway and homeless youth services
6 in New York City and nationally, the YAB is demanding
7 that the following request and areas of improvement
8 are acknowledged and implemented if the city wishes
9 to provide an accurate estimate of homeless youth to
10 the federal government. Number one is the by a
11 single staff at DYCD with no additional funding. In
12 addition, DYCD asked for increased YAB engagement
13 without having resources to support the request.
14 DYCD cannot bank off free labor from the YAB. DYCD
15 need to prioritize funding for the youth count and
16 make it a priority for the agency to do a successful
17 count. This could include a specific budgets to
18 support youth involvement in the surveying process of
19 the count and youth involvement should not only be
20 limited to YAB members. DYCD cannot keep treating
21 the youth count as just another thing they have to do
22 when it should be the biggest event that DYCD runaway
23 and homeless youth unit does every year. DYCD's
24 approach in working with youth with lived experience
25 of homelessness is tokenizing and adultist. DYCD

2 needs to engage in professional development to better
3 understand what it means to work with youth with
4 lived experience in leadership capacity. Secondly,
5 DYCD needs to work collaboratively with the YAB to
6 make sure that there is a clear understanding of the
7 YAB's role in the count, what power we have, and how
8 DYCD will implement an equitable planning and
9 decision making process. DYCD consistently doesn't
10 start planning for the count in a timely manner.
11 This was especially true for this year since we feel
12 that moving the count to a virtual space makes the
13 need for better planning greater as opposed to
14 dedicating less time and resources which is what was
15 done. DYCD needs to work with the YAB to establish
16 an appropriate timeline for planning the youth count.
17 This should include quarterly youth count stakeholder
18 meetings with the larger runaway and homeless youth
19 community where there is a clear messaging about why
20 the count is important and what the benefits of
21 ensuring the count is accurate are. This will make
22 sure the count is being developed by the community as
23 opposed to just DYCD. Overall, DYCD needs to improve
24 their commitments to the needs of youth experiencing
25 homelessness in NYC. DYCD needs to push the youth

2 count and other runaway and homeless youth needs and
3 such needs into their other larger programs and
4 advocate for more resources. DYCD needs to work to
5 strengthen their relationship with the Department of
6 Education and other city agencies that runaway and
7 homeless youth access. DYCD needs to prioritize
8 public awareness of youth homelessness and the DYCD
9 services that exist for them. Everyone knows what
10 summer youth employment is, but most people don't
11 know what runaway homeless youth is. That is a
12 problem that DYCD needs to address. DYCD also needs
13 to ensure that the runaway homeless resources that
14 are shared are accurate. If they are not accurate,
15 they are harmful. Thank you and I am available if
16 you have any questions.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
18 testimony, Maddox. We will now turn for questions
19 from Chair Rose.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. I want to
21 thank you both, Alexander and Maddox, for the work
22 that you're doing on behalf of unsheltered, unstable,
23 and sheltered youth. Your dedication to the young
24 people and their access to resources is really
25 commendable and I want to thank you for your

2 testimony today. I wanted to ask you-- one of the
3 problems that aren't counted during the youth count
4 is that it actually happens usually on the coldest
5 day of the year and the surveyors are not given
6 access to places where young people would probably go
7 in order to get out of the weather. So, could you
8 make any recommendations on how we could have a more
9 accurate youth count or where we need to access to be
10 able to meet young people where they are in order for
11 the count to be the most accurate?

12 MADDUX GUERILLA: Yeah. In the past, we
13 have kind of like informed-- I think in the 2020
14 youth count, we inform hot areas where we know that
15 typically a lot of people-- runaways like young
16 people that aren't experiencing homelessness are.
17 And in that count, we did see that we had better
18 results. We had more surveys than previous years
19 because there was involvement of people with lived
20 experience and we have also recommended that the
21 count be done in summer because we know that, in the
22 winter, people might find, you know, more areas to be
23 indoors, whether those places are safe or not, but we
24 know, in the summer, there's more young people,
25 because it's warmer, you know, staying out in parks

2 and just being outside because the weather is not an
3 issue there.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, are you saying that,
5 to do the youth count in the warmer months would
6 actually get us a more accurate count?

7 MADDOX GUERILLA: Yeah. I believe so.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And how would you
9 incentivize young people to be both surveyors and
10 respondents in the youth count?

11 MADDOX GUERILLA: Yeah. Well, one paying.
12 Like paying the survey and making sure that there's
13 an adequate budget for that, right? Because there's
14 parts, right? It's not just administrative survey.
15 There's the planning phase and, you know, developing
16 the count and informing training folks to do it
17 accurately, and also when you are meeting people on
18 the street-- we are asking young people who are
19 experiencing homelessness to give us information, so
20 we should provide incentives for them. Again, in
21 2020, we did have incentives. I work with two
22 agencies. One agency that didn't have incentive and
23 the other did. The one that did have incentive was
24 Street Works and they provided Metro Cards-- the
25 options of Metro Cards, of supermarket vouchers, or

2 gift cars. And we found that to be success because,
3 obviously, people were more likely to take the survey
4 and even share with other young people to take the
5 survey because there was an incentive involved.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And that-- Oh. I'm
7 sorry. And that was just a method that was utilized
8 by that one provider?

9 MADDOX GUERILLA: Yeah. Yeah. Because
10 not all-- although some providers do get
11 discretionary funding, not all providers use that
12 funding to give incentives. Some providers just use
13 that funding to pay their staff but not, you know,
14 provide incentives for young people that are being
15 surveyed.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm sorry. Alexander,
17 were you going to say something?

18 ALEXANDER PEREZ: Yes. No worries. And
19 so like also it's just like the approach and how we
20 look at youth experiencing homelessness and so this
21 is a little nuanced and a little more complicated,
22 but, you know, there is an energy of what being
23 homeless looks like. You know, and being homeless
24 doesn't always look like chronically on the street,
25 you know, laid out. And I think that if we look at

2 how we approach helping youth in that way, then we
3 are just missing the mark because, you know, youth
4 look like they are walking in business attire. Youth
5 look like many different walks experiencing
6 homelessness. And to be quite frank, a lot of us are
7 not trying to be seen and so how do we make the
8 system tangible? How do we make it welcoming? How
9 do we make it so that we are looking at people in a
10 holistic way and also getting the information out
11 because, I think, also like a lot of the information
12 is not shared that like to be counted is also giving
13 you the ability to claim a voucher and I don't even
14 know how that has been working now, but I know that a
15 lot of this has to do with accessibility and whether
16 or not we are truly looking or have young people
17 represented who are counting that can facilitate that
18 kind of collaboration with youth who are actually on
19 the street because they are in Starbucks. They are
20 in other places. They are in a lot of places that
21 are not just, oh, you know, I'm going to assume that
22 this person is experiencing homelessness.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Do you think
24 that-- How do you think we could improve how we
25 communicate with young people who, you know, have

2 this lived experience, you know, so that the
3 information is more readily accessible? That they
4 know, you know, where they can, you know, get these
5 services and how to access points.

6 ALEXANDER PEREZ: It's the visibility.
7 This is the main takeaway that I've seen over and
8 over again. It is the visibility and it's also just
9 building programs and systems that say, hey, I see
10 you. Making these forms so that folks who identify
11 differently, people who are trans, people who are
12 nonbinary, however, and people who also represent and
13 identify in different ways, that they also feel
14 welcome. So, having that being represented in the
15 media, you know, on the trains, and showing them how
16 important, but also speaking to that in the systems
17 that we provide that empower youth experiencing
18 homelessness and saying that you do not have to show
19 up in just a cookie cutter way because I'm coming
20 from a place of privilege because I can articulate
21 myself. But a lot of the resources and innovative
22 thinking are coming from people that we are often
23 overlooking because we see them as needing to show up
24 in an appropriate way.

2 MADDOX GUERILLA: I would just add, too,
3 as one of our recommendations is providing accurate
4 resources. You know, I always talk about this. One
5 of my biggest pet peeves is that DYCD puts out a palm
6 card that is inaccurate. It is saying that there are
7 shelters that are open 24/7 that any young people can
8 walk into at any time. That's not accurate. You
9 know, they get away with saying that because some of
10 those drop-ins are open to young people who are
11 inside of them and sleeping overnight for 24 hours,
12 but is not open for a young person to receive
13 services at three in the morning. I need to use the
14 bathroom. I can't go to the drop-in at 1:20. I
15 can't just walk into the drop-in at 1:20 to use the
16 bathroom. So, you know, just updating the resources
17 to accurately depict what services are available and
18 what services aren't and just investing more in the
19 marketing and outreach. We should be marketing and
20 outreaching like we do, you know, TV shows so people
21 know like all of the amazing social services there
22 are in NYC to support people even before they become
23 homeless because we know that a lot of young people
24 learn about services after they become homeless over
25 before, right? That we could be intervening before

2 and preventing before than having to come in and
3 being homeless after.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you so
5 much. Your testimony was quite elucidating and very
6 helpful. Are there any questions? Any Council
7 members that would like to ask questions?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Rose, it does
9 not appear that any of the other Council member have
10 their hands raised, but I would like to remind
11 Council members that, if you do have a question,
12 please-- for any of the particular panelists, please
13 use the raise hand function in zoom. But if not,
14 then we can move on, Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. All right. Thank
16 you, again, Alexander and Maddox. Thank you. We
17 will be speaking again after this hearing.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great. I will now
19 call on the following members of the administration
20 to testify: Randy Scott, DYCD assistant commissioner
21 for vulnerable and special needs in the youth
22 division, and Tracey Thorne, RHY director. I will
23 deliver the oath to both of you and, after reading
24 the oath, I will call upon each of you individually
25 by name to respond to the oath one at a time. So,

2 please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell
3 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
4 before this committee and correspond honestly to
5 Council member questions? Assistant commissioner
6 Randy Scott?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. RHY
9 director Tracey Thorne?

10 DIRECTOR THORNE: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

12 Assistant commissioner Scott, you may begin your
13 testimony when ready.

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Thank you
15 very much. Good morning, Chair Rose and members of
16 the Youth Services Committee. I am Randy A. Scott,
17 assistant commissioner for vulnerable and special
18 needs youth at the Department of Youth and Community
19 Development. I am joined by Tracey Thorne, director
20 of Runaway and Homeless Youth programs. On behalf of
21 Commission Chung, thank you for the opportunity to
22 discuss the city's youth count. The youth count is
23 New York City's point in time count of homeless youth
24 who a living on the street as those accessing
25 services at DYCD funded programs citywide. For

2 almost 10 years, the youth count has been integrated
3 with federally mandated [inaudible 00:32:26]
4 conducted by the New York City Department of Homeless
5 Services. These efforts have been in partnership
6 with the United States Interagency Council on
7 Homelessness and Departments of Housing and Urban
8 Development, Health and Human Services, and
9 Education. An effective youth count also depends on
10 the efforts of those on the front lines supporting
11 runaway and homeless youth-- our strong cadre of RHY
12 providers and advocates. Their expertise has been
13 critical in refining and improving the count every
14 year. In the months leading up to the count, DYCD
15 hosts a series of stakeholder planning and feedback
16 meetings and training sessions. This year, despite
17 our stakeholders focused on the immediate needs to
18 keep young people safe and healthy during the
19 pandemic, they assisted in critical planning for 2021
20 count which took place on January 27th through 29th.
21 Since 2004, through the strong commitment of the
22 DeBlasio administration and the City Council. We
23 have strengthened the runaway and homeless youth
24 system. We have more than tripled the number of
25 residential beds from 253 to 813, increased the age

2 for service eligibility up to 24 and opened
3 additional drop-in centers. There are currently
4 eight DYCD funded centers with at least one 24/7
5 center operating in each of the five boroughs. In
6 addition, young people have access to high quality
7 mental health services across the portfolio.
8 Finally, through the New York City UNI project, we
9 are able to expand services to address the unique and
10 often unmet needs of LGBTQ+ youth. Over the past few
11 years, with the feedback from the youth Celi
12 stakeholders. We have worked to refine our approach
13 in determining where we should go to meet young
14 people and now cover areas that include drop-in
15 centers, residential programs, community centers,
16 transportation hubs, public schools, street outreach
17 representatives from the youth count asked young
18 people to complete the short survey. The questions
19 asked about current housing situation, age, gender
20 identity, sexual orientation, and race. We have also
21 expanded the type for over the count from one day to
22 four days, expanded are social media campaign, and
23 strength and outreach in our drop-in centers. We
24 provide drop-in centers with additional funding to
25 offer incentives for young people to complete the

2 survey. Although we are still compounding and
3 analyzing data from this years' count, we would like
4 to offer some highlights of the 2020 youth count.
5 Our planning began in May of 2019 with our first
6 stakeholder kickoff meeting on October 17th of 2019.
7 We included all DYCD funded operators of residential
8 programs, drop-in centers, and street outreach. City
9 agency partners involved ACS, DOP, DOE, Youth Action
10 Board, and Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and
11 Human Services. Other non-profit and advocacy
12 organizations included [inaudible 00:35:53] Martins
13 Institute, Fierce, the Coalition for Homeless Youth,
14 and the Legal Aid Society. These efforts are
15 supported by all members of the RHY staff who work
16 year round to assist in a planned execution of the
17 count. In total, 34 organizations participated in
18 the count and its planning. We're pleased to see
19 that efforts resorted in the increase in total
20 services-- surveys at drop-in centers by 441. The
21 Youth Action Board members surveyed 141 young people
22 and were integral in increasing the total numbers of
23 service. A promising practice emerged as one of the
24 Youth Action Board members traveled in the street
25 outreach phase. The 2020 youth count report

2 responses from a total of 1184 young people. The
3 survey asks questions about where youth had spent the
4 night over the past month in an effort to understand
5 the transience of their homelessness. 631 youth, 53
6 percent, reported being in stable housing, including
7 their parents or relative's home or their own place.
8 498, 42 percent, reported unstable housing such as a
9 shelter or couch surfing. 44 reported unsheltered
10 and representatives offered them shelter at the time
11 of the survey. And eight were outside the city.
12 Despite the Covid 19 pandemic, priming for the 2021
13 New York City youth count started in the spring of
14 2020. DYCD worked closely with advocate, Youth
15 Action Board members, providers, and other
16 stakeholder to update survey questions and to discuss
17 what worked and what additional steps should we take
18 to ensure an accurate count. These efforts were
19 ongoing through January 2021 until the youth count
20 began. We have already begun similar efforts for
21 next years' count. We look forward to continuing to
22 work with all of our partners and the Council to make
23 further improvements. Thank you, once again, for
24 giving us the opportunity to discuss the youth count.
25 We welcome any questions you may have.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you,
3 Assistant Commissioner Scott. RHY Director Tracey
4 Thorne, you may begin your testimony if you have any
5 prepared.

6 DIRECTOR THORNE: I don't have any at this
7 time. I'm here to answer question and support
8 Assistant Commissioner Scott.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Director
10 Thorne. Chair Rose, we can now turn to you to ask--
11 for question.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you,
13 Assistant Commissioner Scott. It's good to see you
14 and, Ms. Thorne, I want to-- before I go on, I want
15 to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council
16 member Chin. I was interested in your statement
17 where you said that you were working on-- already
18 working on next year's count. Did we get the results
19 of the 2021 count?

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: The
21 results of the 2021 count are being tabulated now, so
22 that should be coming out shortly.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you have any idea, a
24 rough idea, of when we might have that?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Usually,
3 the information comes out towards the end of
4 April/early May because we work in tandem with the
5 Department of Homeless Services.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Okay. Thank you.
7 Could you tell me what the current level of staffing
8 and funding that's dedicated to youth count and what
9 is the specific budget presently committed for youth
10 count?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT:

12 Basically, typically, it's two youth count
13 coordinators that are dedicated to the youth count
14 which comes from a OTPS funding. So, another other
15 than personnel services. And in addition to those
16 two youth count coordinators, we have the RHY staff
17 which consist of 12 staff members and in assistance
18 of the youth count, we have different staff from our
19 ACO division, our fiscal division, our legal division
20 that assists in making sure that the youth count is
21 rolled out in the proper way. So, in total, we have
22 the two youth count coordinators that come from a
23 OTPS fund and we have our RHY staff folks and then we
24 have some dedicated staff from other divisions within
25 RHY that assists with youth count.

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, could you tell
3 me so you have 12 other RHY staff members. Are they
4 actively engaged in the youth count? Can you tell me
5 what their role is in the youth count?

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: They are
7 great. Thanks for the question. One of the things I
8 want to point out is that, currently, we have two
9 program managers who are actually youth count
10 coordinators in previous youth count years who we
11 hired to become full time program managers. So what
12 happens during the time that we start the youth count
13 which is usually the May after the reporting and
14 everything comes out of the previous year up until
15 the next April. So, in May of-- So, for example, in
16 May of 2021, we will be planning for next year. So,
17 what happens is staff get together. We talk about
18 the positives and things of how the count went and
19 ways that we can make sure that we put the
20 information out. We start scheduling and put
21 together the necessary times that we want to have
22 stakeholder meetings when we want to have different
23 conversations with those stakeholders and when we
24 want to talk to internal assistance from our IT
25 division, from our legal division, and so on. so,

2 the program managers that work or the staff in RHY
3 that work on youth count, usually in our weekly RHY
4 team meetings, this is a dedicated item on that
5 agenda where we talk about how we're going to put out
6 the efforts and who-- what role people will play
7 from participating in meetings to working with IT to
8 working with legal. So everyone takes a piece of the
9 puzzle, as they may say, and does their part in
10 making sure that the youth count is put out there.
11 And that effort is lead by the Director Tracey
12 Thorne. So, she leads it and then she has our deputy
13 directors who work with her and then the program
14 managers work with the deputy directors based on what
15 information or steps need to be taken.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you feel that the
17 staffing level is adequate and resources at a level
18 that, you know, helps with the efficacy of the count?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Well,
20 over the years-- and, you know, I've been with the
21 DYCD for about 11 years now and I've done almost
22 every-- I've done every youth count that we've put
23 out and from the very first one where we only had six
24 providers that participated to now where we have this
25 bigger system of participants and stakeholders. I

2 feel that the staff have definitely put a lot in in
3 terms of their services and the work necessary for
4 youth count. So, we've evolved the youth count in
5 regards to participants. We've evolved the youth
6 count in terms of locations. We've evolved the youth
7 count in terms of the survey that's being ask. We've
8 evolved the youth count in terms of the way we
9 connect with DHS. So I think, right now, we've done
10 a great job. Is there room for improvement? Of
11 course. And we look forward to working with the
12 stakeholders that are involved to make sure that we
13 continue to improve this youth count every year that
14 we do it.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, you're saying-- How
16 long is the planning stages? You know, what is the
17 timeline for them to-- planning for the youth count
18 annually?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: So,
20 thanks for the question. So the youth count starts
21 May. So, for example, for next year's youth count,
22 we will be starting in May. So, we will close out
23 the 2021 youth count and, for the 2022 youth count,
24 we will start in May of 2021 and that carries over
25 into April of 2022. So, it's usually May of 20--

2 whatever year to April of the next year. And that's
3 the planning timeline for youth count.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you think that--

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: So--

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

7 I'm sorry.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: So,

9 basically, it's almost a year of planning, but go
10 ahead. Sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Do you think that
12 you have adequate staff or that you need additional
13 staffing and resources to do the count?

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: For the
15 work that we're doing, I think we're doing a great
16 job and I give kudos to the staff. You know, from
17 the 12 RHY staff to the two youth count coordinators
18 and to the extended staff that assist us with a great
19 job that's being done. If there's a comparison of
20 the youth count to HOPE count, then I think that's a
21 different discussion that needs to be had, but in
22 regards to what the efforts are being put forth for
23 the youth count. I think there's a great job that is
24 being done by the 14 or more staff that are
25 participating.

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Have you made any
3 efforts to strengthen the youth count methodology
4 that you use?

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes. We
6 have. Yes. We have. And that speaks to what I was
7 sharing before in terms of the first youth count
8 where we had only seven providers and we didn't have
9 a true methodology. Over the course of the next
10 youth count years, we worked with folks like the YAB.
11 We worked with stakeholders that are on the ground
12 doing the work to make sure that our methodology was
13 in place and that methodology was accepted by all of
14 the stakeholder at that time. The methodology is
15 something that's an evolving document or evolving
16 words based on what's happening at the time. So
17 there's always room and that's where the stakeholder
18 meetings come in play where methodology can be
19 improved and changed to make sure it represents
20 what's currently happening at the time.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What issues have you
22 encountered during the planning design and
23 implementation process, you know, of the-- recently
24 for the youth count?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: In
3 respect to the pandemic or--

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: [inaudible 00:47:15] in
5 respect to Covid 19, but, you know, also in general,
6 you know, what were some of the issues that you've
7 encountered in the planning and design and
8 implementation?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Thanks
10 for the question. Some of the concerns that were
11 brought to the table where who was involved because,
12 in the early beginnings, we did not have our sister
13 agencies like the Department of Education. We did
14 not have certain provider agencies at the table. We
15 didn't have the Department of Probation at the table.
16 So, we brought these individuals to the table to make
17 sure that we captured all of the different locations
18 where we could survey youth who fell into the
19 unsheltered or possible unsheltered category. So, we
20 made sure we did that. Other things that we did was
21 the locations that-- we included many additional
22 locations with the assistance from the YAB in terms
23 of helping us identify where those locations were so
24 that folks who were doing the surveys, especially our
25 street outreach teams, could go to those locations

2 and make sure that they surveyed new youth. We also
3 look at in terms of the process, we hired, like I
4 said before, the two youth count coordinators who
5 were doing to work before to become part of our teams
6 so that we made sure that we had the experience and
7 expertise on hand of making sure that there was no
8 drop in how we ran the youth count. And with respect
9 to the pandemic, we followed the guidance that was
10 set by the city and the state and CDC in respect to
11 making sure that we put out a youth count that was
12 safe and one that could still get the bottom line
13 taken care of.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What efforts have you
15 made to improve and to strengthen DYCD's partnership
16 with the Department of Education to increase, you
17 know, the youth count effectiveness and accuracy?
18 Because right now, it seems that it's a bit tenuous.
19 Can you talk to me about your-- you know, the
20 relationship with DOE? How you, you know, engaged
21 and if you're satisfied with the results?

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: We've
23 engaged DOE in many ways. One, not only for youth
24 count, but in other RHY services. So we work closely
25 with the students in temporary housing division of

2 DOE, as well as district 79. Two areas who work with
3 homeless youth and families. So, basically, we made
4 sure that we had regular meetings with the staff over
5 at DOE on that and making sure that they were aware
6 of the youth count and what the expectations of the
7 youth count were. We had discussions on the role
8 that we would love for them to play, especially with
9 having their staff survey youth within their programs
10 and we, you know, made sure that they participated in
11 our stakeholder meetings. It's a great partnership.
12 It's something that we are continuing to improve each
13 year due to services. And, recently, we just put out
14 a-- we work with them and some of our other city
15 agencies to put out a benefits navigator for around
16 housing and homeless which is available online for
17 people to access. So these are some of the ways that
18 we've continued to work with DOE along with some of
19 our other sister agencies like ACS, DSS, HRA, BHS in
20 terms of making sure we all are talking to each
21 other.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Does every school
23 participate-- I would assume you are looking at
24 middle school and high school. It does every school
25 in the system participate? Does each of the schools

2 that to participate, do each of the schools have an
3 identified person that, you know, is accountable for
4 doing the survey? How do you, you know, actually
5 determine who is doing, you know, if every school is
6 doing the survey and how you get the information?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Right.

8 We do have the key partners with which we communicate
9 with her than work with their staff to do the various
10 surveys at the sites that are identified. I'm going
11 as Tracy the word to come off mute and she. In terms
12 of her relationship of building that DOE system so
13 that we can get surveyed.

14 DIRECTOR THRONE: Thanks, Randy. Yeah.

15 We have been working with the Department of
16 Education. We worked with the community schools to
17 do surveys and we work with district 79 and, since
18 the restructuring with students in temporary housing,
19 we have been, like Randy said, we have been really
20 working closely with them and the-- to establish the
21 type of contacts that you're talking about in the
22 schools in order to do all the surveying. So, we're
23 really hopeful for this next round of youth count to
24 have the opportunity to work closely with them for
25 the 2022 youth count.

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So all of the schools do
3 not participate in the youth count?

4 DIRECTOR THORNE: Yeah. We're starting
5 with natural fits for people who definitely
6 understand the needs of young people who are
7 experiencing homelessness who understand that a lot
8 of the young people or the students that they work
9 with our experiencing homelessness or maybe
10 experience homelessness, so we are able to do a
11 proactive approach and also, you know, part of-- and
12 also work with young people who are experiencing
13 homelessness who need extra supports. Part of the
14 youth cannot, a really major part of the youth count
15 is connecting young people to services, making sure
16 young people in the schools know that we're here,
17 that we're able to support them, and that-- and
18 youth count really helps promote those activities and
19 so it's kind of multiprong. You know, we are working
20 in partnership, you know, citywide like Randy
21 described. We are working with people to raise
22 awareness about our services. And we want the
23 schools to participate in youth count.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: How many schools been
3 are you actually working with that participates in
4 the survey?

5 DIRECTOR THORNE: We are working with the
6 students in temporary housing schools in District 79
7 schools. We are going to focus on them for this
8 year. Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, are you dealing with
10 schools outside of District 79?

11 DIRECTOR THORNE: Not at this time. But
12 we could. Not at this time, though.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, is that
14 representative of all five boroughs? The District
15 79--

16 DIRECTOR THORNE: Yeah. It was in all
17 five boroughs. Yes. Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so you talked about
19 outreach. I'm really interested in that. You know,
20 how is-- what does the outreach look like? How is
21 the youth count, you know, marketed and how do we let
22 people know and what's the resource stream to do
23 this? How much funding is attributed for outreach
24 and advertisement, marketing, the website-- all of,
25 you know? All of the ways that you try to reach?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yeah.

3 Well, each year, we look to improve how we do our
4 outreach and, over the years, we've done outreach
5 through our-- as you know, DYCD has a very prevalent
6 social media system where we work with Instagram,
7 Facebook, and all of those different social media
8 places where the youth tend to go. We also have palm
9 cards. Electronic palm cards is something that we
10 have done recently to make sure that people are
11 aware. We have created flyers. We have created
12 posters that have blown up at our various sites to
13 speak to the youth count. And we also shared it
14 electronically with our stakeholders so that they can
15 put it up at their particular sites. We have used
16 the links kiosk to make sure that we promote
17 information on youth count. We have had brochures
18 that we have given out and we, basically, just make
19 sure that we use these-- and word-of-mouth is always
20 one of the best tools to get the information out
21 there. So, those are some of the areas of how we
22 have done it with respect to the youth count. As
23 well as during the time of the youth count, we gave
24 out promotional items such as bags or hats that have
25 the logo that, you know, the YAB helped us create so

2 that we can make sure that folks are wearing hats,
3 carrying bags, and if people ask questions about what
4 does that mean, I count, or they can share the
5 messaging around it as well as give information on
6 how our youth can be surveyed.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: What is your budget for
8 that? Do you have a separate budget line for that?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: It varies
10 year to year. As earlier mentioned, we have an AOTPS
11 budget that is used for youth count, so we,
12 basically, look at the number of providers and
13 stakeholders involved in then we purchase things
14 based on that number. So it can definitely vary in
15 terms of how much we put. I can't put an exact
16 dollar figure 2 it based on the number of
17 participants and stakeholders that we have been
18 involved, but--

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, it is basically
20 predicated on whatever the previous count, sort of
21 the numbers that you got from the previous count.
22 So--

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Well, not
24 the numbers from the previous count. We, basically,
25 look at the number of participants involved in the

2 account because, you know, we are looking at, you
3 know, for our drop-in centers alone. They service
4 14,400 youth in a given year. Our crisis services
5 program surfaced 3000+ youth in a given year and our
6 [inaudible 00:50:31] serviced 1000 and youth in a
7 given year, right? So, we look at those numbers,
8 plus we look at the possibility of what numbers our
9 partners at DOP have. Our partners at ACS have, our
10 partners at, you know, some of the advocacy agencies
11 and some of the provider agencies so that each
12 program can have enough of these incentives and
13 supplies in order to get about two youth that they
14 may survey. Or that may come into their program.
15 So, the number, like I say, it can range from
16 anywhere from 10,000 in terms of the items that we
17 purchased to give out and that number changes. And
18 we work with our internal department, our P PI
19 department on a lot of our imaging and, you know, the
20 promotional information that goes out like flyers and
21 posters and they put together that information for
22 us. So, that is an expense that is an in-kind
23 expense verse is something that we pay for.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you make incentives
25 available for the providers that are participating in

2 the account and are there incentives for young people
3 to participate as surveyors in the process?

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes.

5 Each stakeholder, especially when we do our training
6 in regards to the volunteers that will go out to
7 conduct surveys, each of them are given the items
8 which they bring to the sites that they are scheduled
9 to go to. So, if I am scheduled to come to City Hall
10 to do surveys, then I am coming to City Hall with the
11 necessary items that I would give to the youth who
12 would complete the surveys. One of the things that
13 we have done in kind, as well is we have provided
14 micro purchases to our drop-in centers where they are
15 able to use this funding to hire youth to conduct the
16 survey as well as provide additional incentives for
17 youth that participate in the survey. So, that has
18 been done in the past in regards to how the providers
19 use that funding in order to make sure that the
20 surveys have been during youth count.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. One more question
22 because I know my committee members, you know, have
23 some questions for you also, but I just would like to
24 know the Alexander and Mattox, you know, mentioned
25 that the letter was written into DYCD and that there

2 has been no response. Have you reviewed this letter?
3 Have you considered that recommendations and may be
4 changes to methodology that was recommended by the--
5 I think it was the YAB.

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yeah. We
7 are always delighted to hear from the young people,
8 especially Youth Action Board about their experiences
9 and important insight. You know, we are dedicated to
10 continuing the work with them and with respect to the
11 question about the letter, we are aware of the
12 letter. Our response was sent to the YAB from our
13 Deputy Commissioner, Susan Haskell, to schedule a
14 meeting with the YAB in order to address all of the
15 concerns that were identified in the letter. That
16 meeting was canceled by the YAB, but we are still
17 willing to meet with them to discuss the issues and I
18 move forward together in making sure that the youth
19 count is best for all that need this particular
20 benefit and service.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I would like to be
22 invited to that meeting when it does happen.

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Sure.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And I am going to open
3 the floor to my colleagues. I am going to circle
4 back for a second round.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, chair.
6 I will now call on Council members in the order in
7 which they have used the zoom raise hand function.
8 Council members, please keep your questions to five
9 minutes, including the time for the witness
10 responses. The sergeant-at-arms will keep a timer
11 and let you know when your time is up. We will now
12 hear questions from Council member Chin.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Thank
15 you to Chair rose. I just jumped off on a nether
16 committee hearing on housing and immigration and I
17 don't want to miss the hearing. So, yeah. Thank you
18 for the testimony. I was able to catch part of it.
19 So, my question is that I know that you talk about,
20 that doing this survey and doing the youth count.
21 You connect the youth to services and so I want to do
22 like sort of like connect that to the budget and also
23 the need, right? I know that Director Thorne is here
24 from Homeless and Runaway Youth and I know that this
25 committee has advocated for the increased number of

2 homeless and runaway youth beds from the beginning,
3 right? Beginning of my tenure on the Council and
4 also Council member Rose. So, looking at, you know,
5 information that you are able to gather from these
6 surveys in terms of youth that are in unstable
7 housing or youth that is homeless or on the street,
8 how are you using those information's to advocate for
9 increased, you know, numbers of services and also
10 increased number of beds for homeless and runaway
11 youth? I mean, we have also heard from youth in
12 foster care that are aging out of foster care. So,
13 there is a tremendous need out there. How do you use
14 that information and really transfer it to fighting
15 for more resources?

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Thank you
17 for your question, Council member Chin. And what we
18 do internally as we analyze the information, not only
19 the youth count, but information that comes from
20 other sources. As you know, there are some local
21 laws that we are required to submit some information
22 on, especially demographics. So, we look at that
23 information and we say, okay. Where are we now in
24 terms of making sure that, one, awareness is
25 available for all youth who are in need which we feel

2 can be satisfied at this particular point in time.

3 We have 813 beds which, basically, as you know, it is
4 560 additional beds that were added during this
5 administration so, what we are looking to do is make
6 sure that you are aware of these services and come to
7 the proper places to get it. We have, you know,
8 added 524 our drop-in centers so youth can have
9 access to services around-the-clock and get the
10 necessary needs that they have to make sure that that
11 happens. We have created a new system, at our PTS
12 system, which tracks this information and gives real-
13 time information, but we always ask that are
14 providers continue to communicate with themselves to
15 make sure that you are in need. Over the last two
16 reports that we have submitted for shelter access in
17 terms of youth who were turned away, there were no
18 youth that were turned away from needing or requiring
19 a bed because of the fact that there are so many
20 additional beds online from previous years. And beds
21 include, you know, the 753 for 16 to 20 and the 60
22 for 21 to 24. So we feel that, at this time, you
23 know, if a youth is in need of any particular
24 services, whether it's case management, whether it is
25 mental health, housing, employment, basic life skills

2 such as legal and immigration services, those
3 services can be rendered at sites that currently
4 satisfied the need.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Just remind us.
6 Are the drop-in centers in every single borough?

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes. A
8 24 hour--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [inaudible
10 01:07:11] that you talk about?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes. A
12 24 hour-- we have eight drop-in centers in total.
13 Five of them are 24 hours, one in each borough
14 through an investment from the union project.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And for the
16 homeless and runaway youth, I don't remember an
17 additional budget in the preliminary budget in terms
18 of four additional beds. So, do you see that being
19 changed in the executive budget? Because there still
20 is a tremendous need out there. 813 sounds good, but
21 it really sounds very minimal compared to the needs
22 out there. So, is there a push to increase the
23 budget so that we can increase more beds before the
24 end of this administration? I think we planned to do
25 that. Right, Chair?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I
3 believe, as our commissioner stated, you know, if the
4 funding becomes available, we are willing to make
5 sure that programs are--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Should I
8 stop speaking or--?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: No. No. No.
10 Finish. Yeah.

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Okay.
12 So, are willing to be put online. You know,
13 currently, we have beds that are vacant every given
14 night in high numbers, so we feel that there is a
15 service where we can, you know, assist any youth in
16 need at this given time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: That's a surprise
18 that you have vacant beds?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Every
20 night. Over 100.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Wow. Something is
22 not right out there. Yeah. I think we need to talk
23 with the providers and see what's going on because I
24 remember other hearings when we were advocating for
25 additional beds that, you know, youths were being

2 turned away. So we need to get to the bottom of
3 that. That is definitely something that I didn't
4 expect. Yeah.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: And from
6 the--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: And from
9 the reports that we submit to you, the last two
10 reports show that there were no youths that were
11 turned away.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Thank
13 you, Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Council member Chin. You know, I just want to kind
16 of drill down on that. Council member Chin brings up
17 a good point. From what we know or what we see an
18 experience, the numbers seem to be quite high. In
19 the past, we haven't been able to meet the need, so
20 could this be attributable to the fact that the
21 information is not getting out there? That they
22 don't know that these resources are available or how
23 to access them? Again, you know, I go back to
24 Alexander's point that, you know, the marketing of
25 these programs, is it-- it sounds like it might not

2 be sufficient, you know, if we have empty beds and,
3 clearly, you can see that there's, you know, a need.
4 So--

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: There is
6 communication. Tracey sends out an email daily to
7 the providers with respect to the numbers so that
8 they are very clear. They also know the numbers
9 because they have access to our participant tracking
10 system that captures this information, as well as
11 they communicate with one another in regards to
12 vacancies that they may have and our providers, you
13 know, do a great job in communicating externally,
14 however, we got to remember that sometimes, with the
15 pandemic, certain avenues that they were used to
16 communicating with may not be at full capacity. So,
17 sometimes, they have to think of other ways to get
18 the information out. And all of you know our
19 residential programs are confidential locations. So
20 they can't broadcast. They can't promote the site
21 and say, hey, I have 20 beds vacant a such and such
22 address due to the fact that we have to keep them
23 confidential for the sake of the youth in service.
24 So, it's a matter of making sure that they
25 communicate with local places in their community so

2 that they understand that, hey, if you come in
3 contact with the youth who is in need of housing,
4 we're a resource. Give us a call. Things like that.
5 So, what our providers have done a great job in
6 making sure that they continue to do that. We work
7 with them around that and it's being monitored. We
8 monitor them on that, as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: It sounds to me like you
10 might need to engage young people in some kind of
11 creative marketing where the word will get out. I'm
12 assuming, then, that since you can't give the
13 location of the housing, that they then go through
14 your dashboard through your website, but then there
15 might need to be, you know, more attention paid to,
16 you know, specifying this population and how they
17 can access, you know, housing through, you know,
18 you're existing, you know, routes to get there, but
19 it sounds like you need-- there needs to be an
20 active marketing campaign on subways and places where
21 they frequent because--

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: And that
23 is something that we're doing with our drop-ins
24 because those locations are available for-- to be
25 known in the community. So we're working closely

2 with our drop-in centers to make sure that that
3 happens so that people know that they can go to--
4 that should be the first place that they should go to
5 outside of our street outreach too get the assistance
6 of any housing that they need-- that they may need.
7 So, we definitely have, you know, regular
8 communications with our drop-in centers. We work
9 with them on the planning and outreach that they have
10 which is a component of their contract and we make
11 sure that they are using their staff to the best of
12 their ability to make sure that that messaging is
13 getting out there and, as I stated before, we do use
14 our social media campaign and kiosk to make sure that
15 our outreach-- our outreach and our drop-in centers
16 are known to folks and they get their e glass, they
17 get the newsletter that is sent and we also do it
18 through presentations. The RHY staff does
19 presentations to various stakeholders to make sure
20 that they are aware of this particular service. I
21 recently just did a conference with DOE for a two day
22 conference where I spoke about RHY, the services that
23 we had. And, you know, it's a matter of making sure
24 that the information trickles down to folks on the
25 ground who are working with it. So, those are

2 streams of ways and we're definitely making sure that
3 the messaging is out there.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do the providers have a
5 dedicated budget line for outreach and marketing and,
6 if not, do you think it's something that we should--
7 I think it's something we should consider. It
8 shouldn't come out of just their general operating
9 fund.

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Well,
11 each of the sites, the drop-ins, especially,
12 identified to us what their budgets would be. What
13 the make up will be. What they do during their
14 outreach is a key responsibility of their contract.
15 They do set aside funding for that specific purpose,
16 you know, whether it's done for outreach or whether
17 it's done through program line or whether it's done
18 through the client line, but that is something that
19 our contracted providers do. Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I think it should be
21 sort of a mandated part of the contracts-- each
22 contract. Since it's so important-- Since an
23 accurate count is important for us being able to
24 provide the necessary resources and, you know, if we
25 are undercounting, we're not going to be able to

2 provide the funds needed, you know, to meet the need.
3 So, it's really an important thing and I would hope
4 that we, this committee, would, you know, hear from
5 you about the need. You know, a budgetary need
6 because we want to be able to meet that. And in
7 terms of that, when we have a count that might be an
8 undercount-- this year, there's going to be a big
9 turnover in all of the administration-- Council
10 members and the Mayor. You know, what are we doing
11 to ensure the continuity with the new administration
12 in this area and, you know, what efforts are being
13 made to ensure the availability of accurate estimates
14 of homeless youth population for the new
15 administration so that we don't lose any ground.

16 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Well,
17 basically, what we're doing-- we're going to
18 continue to the work going forward with the new
19 administration. We're going to keep doing and
20 growing from what we're doing and so the count will
21 continue in January and we will monitor and look at
22 how we can continue to grow this particular service.
23 It's been an integral part of RHY for the last few
24 years and I don't see it as disappearing at this
25 present time. So, basically, we're going to make

2 sure that this is communicated in the same channels
3 that we've always communicated. So, I share it with
4 my supervisor. My supervisor shares it up and then
5 I'm sure our commissioner will speak to what the work
6 is being done within the agency.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Are RHY providers
8 contractually obligated to participate in youth count
9 and to what extent? And are they permitted to opt
10 out or limit, you know, their support of
11 participation in the youth count?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: We
13 communicate with our providers on the expectations of
14 their participation in the youth count. As I stated
15 in the very first youth count, it was only the drop-
16 ins that participated, but since then, we've included
17 all of our contracted RHY services and they
18 understand-- they get, you know, the expectations of
19 what the dates, the trainings, what their role would
20 be, how they would complete the survey and signing
21 for the necessary tables or information that they
22 would be receiving. And this is something that we
23 will be looking forward to when we release a new RFP
24 to make sure that it's stated in that RFP.

2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And what youth
3 homelessness specific training is provided for youth
4 count staff and is it trauma informed training?

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes. we
6 have training all throughout the year and it's not
7 specific just to youth count. It's just [inaudible
8 01:19:18] what's happening in the world and doing the
9 work. So, we work heavily with Vibrant which used to
10 be the Mental Health Association of New York and
11 making sure that, you know, training is available.
12 As you know, we have our Health the Hurt conference
13 that we do yearly. We didn't it last year due to the
14 pandemic. We also are looking at various issues
15 around mental health and managing that because things
16 happen at sites and we need to make sure that we're
17 readily available to assist our providers in terms of
18 any mental health needs that they have and, as you
19 know, we have funding that is provided to all of our
20 contracted providers around mental health services so
21 that they are able to hire the necessary staff. They
22 are able to have the necessary mental health services
23 available to youth, as well as their staff.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Um--

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: And sorry
3 to cut you off, but mental health is one of the key
4 components of key indicators that our providers work
5 on within their sites.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Are there any
7 efforts that you are making now to review youth count
8 and your procedures and process and efficacy and the
9 methodology? What are you doing-- you know, are you
10 doing and making any efforts in those areas now and--
11 yeah. Are you doing that?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes. We
13 are. Normally, like I said, with the process, it's
14 from May to April of the following year. So what
15 happens is, usually, after we are able to put all of
16 the information and numbers together, we then process
17 that. We pass it off to our sister agency, DHS, for
18 the full report that is sent to HUD and then we then
19 start the process all over again in looking at what
20 transpired the count prior. Looking at the trends,
21 looking at the highs, looking at the lows, looking at
22 who we could possibly include in the upcoming youth
23 count and looking at how we can get the TAB involved
24 or seeing how we can work with them more closely.
25 So, those are things that we start to do in May of

2 the given year so that we can make sure that, by the
3 time January comes, it's a well-thought and put in
4 place process.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. And there's no
6 plans to ask for more beds or increase resources at
7 this time?

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: That's
9 not a discussion that I've currently had to be
10 party to, but I will definitely bring that question
11 back to the agency heads and see where we are in that
12 process.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I have no more
14 questions. Are there any Council members that would
15 like to ask the questions?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, at this time, I
17 believe we've concluded our first round of questions.
18 If you would like to ask a second round of questions,
19 please keep your questions to two minutes and the
20 sergeant-at-arms will keep a timer and will let you
21 know when your time is up. It looks like we have a
22 raised hand from Council member Chin, so we will now
23 hear questions from Council member Chin.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. I just
3 want not have a follow up question. Since I just,
4 you know, came from the immigration and housing
5 committee, do you have a breakdown or like specific
6 services or housing that's targeted to assist
7 immigrant youth? I know that we have fought for LGBT
8 youth. Are there outreach and, you know, focus on
9 the immigrant youth that's out there that do need
10 this type of support?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: To get--
12 and I had stated this earlier. But there are five
13 key indicators that RHY indicators focus on. there's
14 housing, there's employment, there's mental health,
15 there is-- What am I missing? Housing, employment,
16 mental health, education, and then the fifth one is
17 basic life skills which focuses on legal service
18 and/or immigration services or any other services
19 that don't fit in the other four. The only criteria
20 for our programing in regards to the drop-in centers
21 as well as residential is age. So if an immigrant
22 should need services at any of our drop-ins or would
23 need housing at one of our residential programs, as
24 well as they meet the age criteria, they are eligible
25 for that service. Once they get into that program,

2 then our seasoned providers work with that particular
3 youth in getting the necessary resources or benefits
4 that they should require in order to regain their
5 independence. So, basically--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Are there any
7 like-- Yeah. It's age. Yeah. But are there any
8 partnerships with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
9 Affairs to really get the information out there to
10 the immigrant community that this resource is
11 available?

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes.
13 Thanks for that question because there is one--
14 there is a local law out there that requires us to
15 work with MOIA and have training twice a year and we
16 just recently just had a training with MOIA where
17 they came to our provider meeting and shared updated
18 information and resources with our providers on how
19 to work with immigrants. So that is something that's
20 embedded in our services and, you know, we-- like I
21 said, we had a nice training last week with MOIA
22 officials.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. I think it
24 would be also good to have like a number if we have,
25 you know, in terms of immigrant youth or undocumented

2 that are service by this program or they are in the
3 homeless and they are utilizing the runaway and
4 homeless youth bed and the services and the drop-in
5 center. I think that that would be good to know.

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Okay.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Thank
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. It
11 looks like, at this time, we have concluded the
12 second round of questions. Chair Rose, we will now
13 turn to you for any remarks before the administration
14 is excused.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Chair, you are on mute.
16 There you go.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, you're muted
18 again. Sorry. Would you mind repeating that?
19 Apologies, I think you're-- no. I think we're
20 having technical difficulties here. Chair, would you
21 like me to continue or would you like to-- All
22 right. It's okay. So I think we're going to move on
23 to the public panel until-- while the Chair resolves
24 her technical difficulties, but for the public
25 testimony, I will call up individuals in panels.

2 Council member who have questions for a particular
3 panelist should use the raise hand function in zoom.
4 You will be called on after everyone in that panel
5 has completed their testimony. For public panelists,
6 once I call your name, a member of our staff will
7 unmute you and the sergeant-at-arms will give you the
8 go ahead to begin speaking after setting the timer.
9 All public testimony will be limited to three
10 minutes. After I call your name, please wait a brief
11 moment for the sergeant-at-arms to announce you and
12 that you may begin before starting your testimony.
13 The public panelists will be in the following order:
14 Pascale Larosiliere from Good Shepherd Services,
15 Ramon Leclerc from New Alternatives, and Jamie
16 Powlovich from the Coalition for Homeless Youth.
17 Pascale Larosiliere, you may begin your testimony
18 now.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 PASCALE LAROSILIERE: Good afternoon.

21 Thank you for this opportunity. I'd like to ask if
22 there's an opportunity to go to the next panelist
23 because I'm having a hard time pulling up my current
24 testimony. Is that possible?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Not a problem.

3 We'll turn to you after the next panelist. So, Ramon
4 Leclerc, you may begin your testimony.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

6 RAMON LECLERC: I want to say that I
7 found a lot of inaccuracies in Mister-- in the
8 testimony from DYCD. He stated that no one is turned
9 away. I don't know if it's not taken into account
10 the LGBTQ population because every night I sit in the
11 office at New Alternatives and watch my direction,
12 Kate Barnhardt, make phone calls to RHY housing
13 providers and our clients are turned away and also,
14 the number of 15 homeless youth on the street is
15 totally inaccurate. We see a population of about 50
16 homeless youth who are currently living on the
17 streets, who all identify as LGBTQ, on a weekly
18 basis. So, I don't know who DYCD is talking to and
19 I'm sorry that I'm frustrated, but yeah. There needs
20 to be a better way to make sure everybody is talented
21 because these counts just seem like they are only
22 going to areas of privilege or whatever, but I know
23 for a fact that these numbers are not accurate. I'm
24 [inaudible 01:30:22] my time.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
3 testimony, Ramon. I will now turn to Jamie Powlovich
4 to testify.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

6 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Good morning. My name
7 is Jamie Powlovich and I'm the executive director of
8 the Coalition for Homeless Youth. I would like to
9 thank Chair Rose for holding today's hearing and for
10 the Council's ongoing support of youth experiencing
11 homelessness in New York City. I will be submitting
12 longer testimony outlining the history of the youth
13 count, but during my time today, I will focus on our
14 recommendations regarding the count and will add that
15 we strongly support everything that has already been
16 stated by the Youth Action Board. I would also like
17 to state that there were many things stated during
18 the testimony of the administration that we would
19 that we will expand on, as well, and our written
20 testimony. However, their testimony does highlight
21 how their continues to be an unfortunate disconnect
22 between what is really happening and what they want
23 to portray is happening regarding services for youth
24 experiencing homelessness in the city. I would also
25 like to specifically respond to what Assistant

2 Commissioner Scott said regarding the YAB letter,
3 since the YAB is already testified. I am personnel
4 leave the provider ally for the New York City Youth
5 Action Board and someone who is personally CC'd on
6 all correspondences. Assistant Commissioner Scott's
7 response to the Chair's question is not true and
8 extremely concerning. The New York City Youth Action
9 Board explicitly asks for a response to their letter
10 in writing, which Maddox previously testified to and,
11 to date, DYCD has not responded to them in writing.
12 The YAB has never scheduled nor cancelled a meeting.
13 Regarding the youth count, it is imperative that we
14 have an accurate estimate of homeless youth in New
15 York City given the power such numbers play in the
16 resources provided for this extremely vulnerable and
17 often invisible population. Systematic under counts
18 of street homeless youth only support systematic
19 under resourcing to providers and a lack of needed
20 services to our youth. Our recommendations are as
21 follows-- and I apologize in advance. I know I
22 won't get through them all. Number one, the city
23 must provide adequate funding for the youth count.
24 The last funded youth count that was conducted in New
25 York City was funded by City Council in 2007 and 2008

2 and was championed by the late Councilman Lou Fidler.
3 This count is now over a decade old, but is still the
4 number that is most often quoted by providers and
5 advocates. We greatly appreciate the Council--
6 specifically Speaker Johnson-- for including the
7 need for a comprehensive youth count in his 2020 Case
8 for Change report. However, minus adequate funding,
9 it will not produce accurate results. Number two,
10 although the city must only use the numbers of youth
11 that meet the HUD definition found during the youth
12 count as a part of their point in time numbers, DYCD
13 has the ability to use the larger, more accurate
14 numbers from the count when they talk about the
15 population size locally. We know that hides
16 definition is extremely narrow and often does not
17 capture the many ways in which youth experience
18 homelessness, but DYCD is only quoting numbers that
19 align with the HUD definition. They are
20 misrepresenting not only the amount of youth
21 experiencing homelessness in New York City, but those
22 youths lived reality. Number three, we must increase
23 the youth involvement in all aspects of the count.
24 Homeless youth are the experts when it comes to their
25 own experiences and their voices should be at the

2 forefront of the count planning. Implementation and
3 recommendation phases of the process, and they should
4 be given a monetary stipend for their time. Number
5 four, in 2019, DYCD took over all aspects of the
6 count from CIDI. Since that time, it has been
7 understaffed and we have seen a significant delay in
8 the release of the findings from the count, hence the
9 2020 report has still not been released. Therefore,
10 we recommend that DYCD ensure that the oversight of
11 the count is adequately staffed, including by youth
12 with lived experience, that they start planning for
13 the next years count as soon as the current year
14 count concludes, and that they ensure that the youth
15 count reports are completed in a timely manner so
16 that they can be made available as soon as HUD
17 releases that year's pet data. Number five, the city
18 needs to ensure that the DOE participates in the
19 count. A common factor in the success of youth
20 councils across this country has been establishing a
21 strong collaboration and commitment from the
22 educational systems. Although this is something that
23 DYCD commits to doing it every single year the
24 process in time to ensure a successful collaboration,
25 given the DOE's IRB requirements. Number six, the

2 count needs to be incentivized. Youth must be
3 compensated for participating in a survey. This is a
4 financial burden that should not be responsible of
5 the volunteering agencies and should be provided by
6 DYCD. Number seven, the city should invest in a PSA
7 campaign for the next years count. The PSA would
8 increase that outreach to the youth that need service
9 as and need to be counted, as well as bring attention
10 to the homeless youth epidemic with the general
11 public. Number eight, the count sites need to be
12 established through all five boroughs to make sure we
13 are adequately reaching youth no matter where they
14 are. And, number 10, the city needs to utilize and
15 recruit a larger number of volunteers to assist with
16 the count. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
17 today and I am happy to answer any questions that you
18 may have.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
20 testimony. I will now turn to Pascale Larosiliere,
21 if you are available.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

23 PASCALE LAROSILIERE: Yes. Thank you for
24 this opportunity. I must apologize. I am having
25 some technical issues with the file and we will have

2 to submit our testimony in writing. So, at this
3 moment, I would like to relinquish the rest of my
4 time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
6 much. We will. I will now turn to Chair Rose for
7 questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. I hope you
9 can hear me. Can you?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can. Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I have to apologize. I
12 don't know what happened. It just said the
13 microphone no longer existed. So, I am sorry. I
14 want to thank our panelists, our advocates, and our
15 providers. I would like to know, in your opinion,
16 what level of staffing and funding do you think is
17 needed for DYCD and for the providers to ensure an
18 effective and accurate youth count?

19 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Is that question for
20 anyone?

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah. Anyone who would
22 like to take it on. Do you think there should be a
23 dedicated budget line for the youth count and
24 dedicated staffing? And what would that look like in
25 order to ensure that we get in accurate youth count?

2 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Well, I think--
3 speaking from the coalition, I think that when we
4 talk about youth counts, we should talk about it in
5 two different lenses. I think that, one, there is
6 the obligation to the point in time and hope count
7 that we need to do per HUD, right? And so, I think
8 that is one support that the providers need is an
9 assessment of what staffing and volunteer to be able
10 to produce adequate numbers during the youth count
11 the consecutive days after of the larger hope count
12 to send those numbers to hide. But I think also
13 equally as important and one of the things that I
14 know that Speaker Johnson outlined in the Case for
15 Change report is the need for New York City to
16 conduct another separate comprehensive youth count
17 that really goes above and beyond what is already
18 allowed by the limited perimeters that HUD sets
19 forth. And so, I think regarding staffing and budget
20 for that count, you are talking about a lot more need
21 for increased staffing, obviously, to conduct a count
22 of that magnitude, plus a budget, right? Because,
23 ideally, a count like that would be done alongside
24 the formal research entity and wouldn't be overseen
25 by the DYCD. For example, the 2007 count that

2 Council had funded was done by the Coalition for
3 Homeless Youth. It was not done by DYCD.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Thank you--

5 RAMON LECLERC: I'm sorry. In addition,
6 I feel like each provider should be able to provide
7 their own count because I feel like the numbers that
8 DYCD presented were very under and misrepresented by
9 various populations. I don't have access to see, you
10 know, a breakdown of, you know, LGBT, foster care,
11 but I feel like there are some real
12 disproportionately skewed numbers for them to have
13 such low numbers. So I feel like each provider
14 should maybe have their own count then submit their
15 counts to either DYCD or the City Council itself.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. In your
17 experience, do you think there's a gap between the
18 currently available RHY beds and the needed RHY beds?

19 RAMON LECLERC: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yes.

21 RAMON LECLERC: Yes. I do. Like DYCD
22 stated, there were no open-- that there were over
23 100 open beds on any given night. I have sat in the
24 office and watched my director, Kate Barnhardt, on
25 the phone with either Ally Fornay or other providers

2 who are on the DYCD list and they say they have
3 nothing. So, I don't know where they are getting
4 their facts from. I mean, I don't know if it's
5 because we're talking to LGBT specific beds or not,
6 but we keep hearing no, so I want to know where's
7 the, you know-- where are their numbers coming from
8 as providers like ours experiences.

9 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Yeah. And I think, to
10 add-- I think Ramon raises a really great point. I
11 think that when we look at beds for homeless youth,
12 we can't look at just numbers of beds that are
13 needed, but what kinds of beds are needed. And I
14 think that that is one of the biggest downsides to
15 the runaway homeless youth shelter system is that it
16 wasn't built intentionally around the needs of young
17 people, right? We know that not all young people are
18 the same and so not all services should be the same
19 and I think that there is a lot of unique things in
20 the runaway homeless youth system that-- and we
21 shouldn't conform to the way the DHS system does
22 things, but I think that one of the things that DHS
23 does that DYCD doesn't do is that after individuals
24 go through the assessment period in the adult shelter
25 system, they can be streamlined into more specialized

2 services and, despite her constant advocacy with DY
3 CD to create things like, for example, mental health
4 specific tils or crisis programs for young people
5 experiencing homelessness, they continue to only
6 contract services blindly, quite frankly, just based
7 on, you know, overall population and demographics.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. It seems
9 that we are missing the point if we are not meeting
10 the needs, you know, of the population that is out
11 there. When we talk about youth engagement
12 approaches, what would you recommend giving the
13 population tendency to try to stay hidden as a
14 survival strategy? How do we engage them? How do we
15 count them and get them, you know, the services that
16 they need?

17 JAMIE POWLOVICH: I mean, I think-- Go
18 ahead, Ramon.

19 RAMON LECLERC: Providers. Like even
20 though we are not funded by the city, just the amount
21 of people that we see-- and, yes, we don't stay
22 within the parameters of age. We have an aftercare
23 program, also, but, I mean, just-- I'm sorry. It
24 just boggles my mind, but, yeah. Just visit sites
25 like ours, like Sylvia Place. The nontraditional.

2 Because I feel like DYCD is only focusing
3 nontraditional city services, but we as a city-- and
4 if we want to really protect the vulnerable
5 population, we have to think outside of what is city
6 funded and actually deal with what is actually
7 happening out here. I'm sorry. I don't have the
8 words to really--

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: It's okay. I understand
10 what you are saying. Jamie, you know, we know that
11 the count happens during, you know, usually the
12 coldest day of the year. How do we reach those young
13 people who, you know, are not in the places that the
14 count walks in terms of finding them? What do you
15 think about the methodology? How do we get an
16 effective, efficient count, you know, taking that
17 into consideration?

18 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Well, I think that one--
19 and I think Maddox and Alexander did a great job
20 testify to this. We have to listen to young people
21 with lived experience. And by listening we don't
22 just bring them to the table so that you can say they
23 were there. Bring them to the table and give them
24 the power and the autonomy to actually inform what is
25 happening. You know, supporting the YAB over the

2 years-- and especially with their involvement of the
3 youth count, they have the answers, but DYCD just
4 doesn't listen all the time. I think a very, you
5 know, minor, but telling example is I know that DYCD
6 testified that the YAB was a part of the marketing
7 tools that were put forth for the count. DYCD sent
8 out two versions of the marketing tools and asked the
9 YAB which ones they thought were better, right?
10 Represented the color scheme or what attracted young
11 people more than DYCD literally went with the color
12 scheme that the YAB didn't vote for. You know, like
13 very simple examples. I think it is just telling.
14 Don't just ask them for their input so that you can
15 put in your report that they were involved. You have
16 to actually take the feedback and implemented. And I
17 think that the other thing is-- and I know I said it
18 in one of my recommendations-- that the numbers that
19 are put forth in the numbers that are quoted by DYCD
20 are the ones that meet the HUD definitions. That
21 does not mean that locally, right, DYCD cannot quote
22 the much larger numbers that are also a part of the
23 youth count, assuming that the 2020 report numbers
24 will be the same, because we haven't seen the report
25 yet, so I don't know, but in 2019, right, they have

2 build out all the other information, unique
3 information that they collect in the youth count that
4 isn't collected in the Hope count that produce much
5 larger numbers of young people that are experiencing
6 homelessness as the coalition would agree that
7 homelessness should be defined, right? Young people
8 that are couch surfing or exchanging sex for shelter
9 or are doubled up in an abandoned building. Those
10 numbers don't go to hot, but it doesn't mean that,
11 locally, DYCD can't quote those numbers instead
12 which, although we would argue still aren't 100
13 percent accurate, I think they are representative of
14 much more accurately the actual population size.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you.

16 JAMIE POWLOVICH: You're welcome.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You know, I know that
18 the YAB sent the letter which hasn't been responded
19 to yet. I read many of the recommendations. I
20 thought that they were very timely and on point and
21 would increase the efficacy of the count. One of my
22 concerns was that-- I'm not sure that their
23 relationship with DOE is the most effective and that,
24 you know, I think they're missing an opportunity to
25 collect some information that they might not, you

2 know-- might be missing. So, do you have any
3 suggestions or what efforts do you think should be
4 made to strengthen the DYCD partnership with the
5 Department of Education to, you know, improve the
6 efficacy of the count?

7 JAMIE POWLOVICH: I think, you know-- and
8 I don't want to miss me, so I'm happy to follow up
9 with you with the exact answer, but my understanding
10 is that, like all city agencies, DOE has a pretty
11 intensive process that individuals need to go through
12 to conduct research in the school facilities which is
13 what the youth count is, right? It is research.
14 They have an IRB process in my understanding from the
15 meetings that I have attended regarding the youth
16 count is that we don't get through the IRB process in
17 time for the DOE to be engaged in a way that I think
18 would be as fruitful as we would like regarding their
19 participation in the youth count. My understanding
20 is that the DOE is not the individuals that are
21 administering the youth count in the limited number
22 of schools that it is conducted in and that, instead,
23 the surveys are conducted through community-based
24 organizations that are right under nonprofits that
25 are housed in the DOE schools as a way to work around

2 the IRB process because the approvals are obtained in
3 time. So, that speaks to two just the planning
4 concerns around the youth count. I know that, again,
5 Assistant Commissioner Scott testified that they
6 start planning in May. Maybe those are internal
7 meetings that outsiders are not involved in, but the
8 actual planning regarding bringing stakeholders in
9 order even the YAB happened in the mid to late fall
10 and so, if that is the same time that they are
11 submitting those requests from the DOE, it's not
12 surprising that we don't get into the schools.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

14 JAMIE POWLOVICH: You're welcome. I will
15 also say that, regarding the 2021 count-- and, you
16 know, one of the things that was concerning in the
17 testimony from the administration's they did not have
18 youth count coordinators. My hat goes off to Ms.
19 Tracey Thorne and all of the time and effort that she
20 personally put into the youth count, but she
21 literally was the youth count this year. There was
22 not program coordinators that were designated to the
23 youth count. There has been in previous years, but
24 for this year, like the YAB testified, very difficult
25 year given the pandemic and having to implement new

2 and innovative ways to reach young people to conduct
3 the survey, DYCD did not employ outside individuals
4 to come and support the count which was concerning.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, the outcome of
6 the count, we feel, will probably be, again, result
7 in undercounting of young people that are out there.

8 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Yeah. The only examples
9 that we have to, I think, allude to the fact that
10 2021 is definitely not going to be a number we are
11 going to be proud of as a city is that, in 20-- the
12 only numbers that we have from 2020 is just the raw
13 data of electronic surveys that were administered.
14 So, it doesn't include the papers surveys and it
15 isn't reflective of the number of young people that
16 will be identified in those surveys as actually
17 homeless which is the number of surveys that were
18 conducted in 2021 compared to 2020 is a fourth of the
19 surveys that were conducted in 2020 were conducted in
20 2021 electronically. So, already were starting with
21 that many less surveys being completed. You can only
22 assume that the number of young people that are going
23 to be identified is going to be significantly less.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah. That, you
25 know, causes me concern because then I worry about

2 being able to meet the need and the turnover in
3 administration, I worried that they won't have
4 accurate numbers to continue to build upon. And I
5 don't want to see the program set back. You know, I
6 want to thank you for all of your work that you and
7 Ramon are doing in this area. You know, the
8 document, the letter that was sent to DYCD was very
9 comprehensive and I am very anxious to see that
10 meeting happened so that we can talk about the
11 methodologies and how to improve the efficacy of the
12 youth count because--

13 RAMON LECLERC: Excuse me.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Excuse me? Ramon?

15 RAMON LECLERC: I just thought about
16 would you break up the fact that the data is recorded
17 electronically. There's a problem with that because
18 so many homeless youth don't have that access. You
19 know, they don't have the means to keep their phones
20 on and what-- you know, places such as Apple Store
21 and Best Buy that were 24 hours no longer providing
22 24 hour-- you know, open 24 hours and plus the fact
23 that their phones get stolen, broken. It is hard for
24 our homeless youth to remain on technology that they
25 need every single day. Not only for things like the

2 count, but to be productive in general. So, that is
3 a real flaw in the system when you're trying to count
4 homeless youth electronically. You're never going to
5 be able to get an accurate count when the device is
6 not accessible to the homeless youth.

7 JAMIE POWLOVICH: Yeah. And I think
8 regarding Ramon's point, one of the recommendations--
9 I knew I was running out of time, so I didn't say it
10 out loud, but it was that for the virtual count this
11 year with the pandemic, DYCD utilized Web X and I am
12 far from a tech expert, but it is, at least from my
13 experience, it's the least user-friendly app to use.
14 And, despite the feedback from the YAB, right,
15 because it's not a platform like Zoom or Google Meet
16 recommitted just click on a link and you are in the
17 room, you have to actually downloaded app to use Web
18 X. And so, that was a concern that was brought
19 forth, but the count continued to be conducted on Web
20 X. So, I think that also highlights all the points
21 Ramon is making. So, even for young people that may
22 be found access to technology, your also asking them
23 to download apps to complete a survey.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That is a very
25 important point. You know, we saw, you know, the

2 digital divide. We saw the lack of access to
3 equipment and broadband across the board. We saw
4 that with our senior population. We saw that with,
5 you know, our young people in school not having
6 access to equipment and the impact that it had. So,
7 in addition to some of the built-in flaws in the
8 youth count, they were exacerbated by Covid 19 and
9 the additional issues that it provided for people to
10 work remotely or electronically. I thank you for
11 bringing that up. I think it's important for that to
12 be a part of the record. I know Council member Chin
13 and I, we are on the budget negotiating team and we
14 work really hard to make sure that, you know, our
15 populations get what they need. And so, you know, I
16 thank you for being so precise about what happened
17 and, you know, what needs to be looked at in terms of
18 resources. So, does any other-- are there any hands
19 raised for anyone who has questions?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Rose, there
21 are not any hands raised at this time, but I would
22 like to remind Council members who have questions for
23 a particular panelist, to use the raise hand function
24 and you will be called after the panel has completed

2 their testimony. But, yes. Given that there are no
3 other hands raised, we can move on.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, everyone.

6 So, I believe at this point, we have concluded public
7 testimony. However, if we inadvertently missed
8 anyone that would like to testify, please use the
9 zoom raise hand function and we will call on you in
10 the order in which your hand was raised. I will give
11 everybody a minute to respond. Okay. Ramon, are you
12 raising your hand? Is anything you'd like to check?

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: No. I think he is
14 waving.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: He is waving.
16 Okay. Well, Chair Rose, we have concluded public
17 testimony for this hearing.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay. Well, again, I
19 want to thank everyone who participated in testified
20 at this hearing. I want to thank my colleagues for
21 being here and for always making our youth an
22 important part of legislation in the budget. The
23 youth count is really important and we can't afford
24 to under count this very, you know, vulnerable
25 population. And so, I'm going to continue to work

2 with DYCD and with the providers to increase the
3 efficacy of the youth count and to look at the
4 methodologies that might need to be changed so that
5 we can get an accurate count. So, with that, I just
6 want to thank everybody for participating in today's
7 hearing and this hearing is now adjourned.

8 [gavel]

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date _____ June 21, 2021 _____