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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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May 20, 2022
Start: 9:35 a.m.
Recess: 1:33 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING, VIRTUAL ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan,
Chairperson of the Committee on
Finance

Diana Ayala,
Chairperson of the Committee on
General Welfare

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Tiffany Cabán
Crystal Hudson
Linda Lee
Chi A. Ossé
Lincoln Restler
Kevin C. Riley
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung
Nantasha M. Williams
Shahana K. Hanif
Marjorie Velázquez
Francisco P. Moya

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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COUNCIL MEMBERS: (CONT.)

- Ari Kagan
- Selvena Brooks-Powers
- Farah N. Louis
- Gale A. Brewer
- Pierina Ana Sanchez
- Charles Barron
- David M. Carr
- Keith Powers

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Gary Jenkins
DSS Commissioner

Jill Berry
DSS First Deputy Commissioner

Lisa Fitzpatrick
HRA Administrator

Joslyn Carter
DHS Administrator

Ellen Levine
DSS Chief Performance Planning and Financial
Management officer

Karen St. Hilaire
DSS Chief of Staff

Jess Dannhauser
Commissioner of the Administration for Children
Services

Winette Saunders
First Deputy Commissioner of the Administration
for Children Services

Michael Moiseyev
Deputy Commissioner for Finance of the
Administration for Children Services

Stephanie Gendell
Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs of the
Administration for Children Services

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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
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SERGEANT KOTOWSKI: Computer recording started.

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SERGEANT GONZALEZ: Cloud recording has started.

4

SERGEANT LEONARDO: Okay, good morning and

5

welcome to today's remote fiscal 2023 Executive

6

Budget Hearing of the New York City Council Committee

7

on Finance. At this time, we ask that Council

8

Members and staff please turn on their video for

9

verification purposes.

10

To minimize disruptions throughout the hearing,

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please place cellphones and electronic devices to

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vibrate or silent. We thank you for your

13

cooperation. Chair's, we are ready to begin.

14

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Sergeant.

15

[GAVEL]. Good morning everyone. Sorry for the delay

16

for those of you tuning in at home and for all my

17

colleagues and welcome to Friday, May 20, 2022. It's

18

the 8th day of Executive Budget hearings. My name is

19

Justin Brannan, I am the Chair of the Finance

20

Committee and I'm joined today by my good friend and

21

colleague Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala who serves as

22

Chair of the Committee on General Welfare.

23

I'm pleased to welcome Gary Jenkins, my good

24

friend, Commissioner of the New York City Department

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of Social Services. DSS oversees both the HRA, the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 Human Resources Administration and the Department of
3 Homeless Services. Thank you Commissioner Jenkins to
4 you and your team for joining us today as we delve
5 deeper into the Executive Budgets of HRA and DHS.
6 HRA's projected fiscal '23 budget of \$10.9 billion
7 represents 10.9 percent of the city's proposed fiscal
8 '23 budget in the executive plan.

9 HRA's FY23 Budget increased by 1.1 percent from
10 the preliminary plan. The net increase was the
11 result of several actions taken in the Executive
12 Plan. The most significant of which are a transfer
13 of \$109.6 million to health and hospitals for its
14 supplemental Medicaid payments. The addition of
15 \$118.5 for rental assistance programs. The addition
16 of \$33.8 million for HIV and AIDs services. The HASA
17 Emergency Housing and lastly, the addition of \$30
18 million for EFAP, the very important Emergency Food
19 Assistance Program.

20 DHS's projected FY23 budget of \$2.4 billion
21 represents 2.4 percent of the city's proposed FY23
22 budget as presented in the Mayor's Executive Plan.
23 DHS's fiscal '23 budget increased by 9.6 percent, a
24 considerable increase from the preliminary plan.

25

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2 The next increased was the result of several
3 actions taken in the Mayor's Executive Plan. The
4 most significant of which are a new need of \$32.9
5 million for the prevailing wage for contracted
6 shelter security guards and \$171.3 million to support
7 the expansion of outreach and emergency housing for
8 our street homeless population.

9 My questions today will focus mainly on federal
10 COVID grant funding. End of line homeless outreach
11 services and staffing and systems for benefit
12 processing. I want to thank Julia Haramis for her
13 work on today's hearing. My special Advisory John
14 Yedin, Malcom Butehorn our Counsel and all of the
15 Finance Staff who work so, so hard behind the scenes.
16 We are now on Day 8 of executive budget hearings and
17 your hard work by the Finance team does not go
18 unnoticed.

19 We're a little behind schedule, so I want to turn
20 it now to my Co-Chair, Deputy Speaker Ayala for her
21 opening remarks.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you and good morning
23 Chair Brannan. I am Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala,
24 Chair of the General Welfare Committee. Thank you
25 for joining me for the Fiscal Year 2023 Executive

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 Budget hearing for the General Welfare Committee,
3 held jointly with the Finance Committee.

4 The city's proposed Fiscal 2023 Executive Budget
5 totals \$99.7 billion, of which approximately \$13.2
6 billion or over 13 percent funds the Department of
7 Social Services and compacting the Human Services
8 Administration and the Department of Homeless
9 Services.

10 These two agencies serve the most vulnerable
11 populations in the city and their vital work is now
12 more important than ever given the impact of the
13 pandemic has had on our city and the economic
14 wellbeing of its most vulnerable residents.

15 Council's budget response made it clear that
16 protecting housing opportunities, the social safety
17 net and servicing our most vulnerable residents are
18 some of the Council's top priorities. I am very glad
19 to see that the Administration added funding in the
20 Executive Plan for several of the Council's
21 proposals, including for Safe Haven beds,
22 stabilization beds, drop-in centers and other support
23 services for the street homeless population, as well
24 as for the additional staff of supported housing
25 applications and placements.

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
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2 While I was pleased to see the funding added for
3 rental assistance vouchers, the prevailing wage for
4 shelter security, HASA emergency shelter units and
5 emergency food, funding for the essential programs
6 was only added for a year or two and should be
7 baselined. I am disappointed to see that the
8 executive budget did not add funding for a call up of
9 human service workers to convert hotels formally used
10 to house homeless families into affordable permanent
11 housing for those families. To improve the path
12 intake process for families with children and to
13 increase domestic violence shelter capacity. To
14 improve client service efficiency for HRA benefit
15 assistance programs or to ensure that the right to
16 counsel program can handle the increase and the
17 demand for eviction leading services.

18 Given the end of the State of the Eviction
19 Moratorium and the ongoing impact of the pandemic, I
20 strongly feel that the city needs comprehensive
21 planning and a clear path forward to combat poverty
22 and homelessness. Both during the remainder of the
23 pandemic and in the long recovery after it. I would
24 like to thank the General Welfare Committee Staff for
25 their work on putting this hearing together today.

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2 Julia Haramis Senior Finance Analyst, Aliya Ali Unit
3 Head, Dohini Sompura Assistant Director, Aminta
4 Kilawan Senior Counsel and Cristi Dwyer Legislative
5 Policy Analyst. And I would also like to thank my
6 Deputy Chief of Staff Michelle Cruz and now,
7 Commissioner Jenkins, our Counsel will swear you in.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. Good
9 morning every or yeah, still good morning everyone
10 and welcome to the first portion of the Executive
11 Budget Hearing for May 20th, the Human Resources
12 Administration and the Department of Homeless
13 Services under the Department of Social Services. I
14 would first like to acknowledge Council Members
15 present for the record, Council Members Brannan,
16 Ayala, Hanif, Ung, Ossé, Velázquez, Cuban, Riley,
17 Hudson, Moya, Lee, Kagan, Brooks-Powers, Louis,
18 Brewer, Sanchez, Barron, Stevens, Restler and Carr.

19 I want to remind Council Members and members of
20 the mayoral administration; you will have the ability
21 to mute and unmute yourselves. We just ask when not
22 speaking to please remember to place yourself on
23 mute. Council Members who have questions, should use
24 the raise hand function in Zoom, you will be called
25 in the order with which you raised your hand. We

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 will be limiting Council Member questions to five
3 minutes.

4 The following members of the Administration are
5 here to testify and/or answer questions. Gary
6 Jenkins, DSS Commissioner; Jill Berry DSS First
7 Deputy Commissioner, Lisa Fitzpatrick HRA
8 Administrator, Joslyn Carter DHS Administrator, Ellen
9 Levine DSS Chief Performance Planning and Financial
10 Management officer and Karen St. Hilaire DSS Chief of
11 Staff.

12 I will first read the oath and after, I will call
13 on each member from the Administration individually
14 to respond. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
15 whole truth and nothing but the truth before these
16 Committees and to respond honestly to Council Member
17 questions? Commissioner Jenkins?

18 GARY JENKINS: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: First DC Berry?

20 JILL BERRY: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Administrator Fitzpatrick?

22 LISA FITZPATRICK: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Administrator Carter?

24 JOSLYN CARTER: I do.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Officer Levine?

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
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ELLEN LEVINE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Chief of Staff Hilaire?

KAREN ST. HILAIRE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Commissioner
Jenkins, you may begin when ready.

GARY JENKINS: Thank you and good morning. Good
morning. I want to thank the Finance and General
Welfare Committees and Chair Brannan and Deputy
Speaker Ayala for holding today's hearing and giving
us the opportunity to testify. We look forward to
updating the Committees on the Department of Social
Services' Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Budget and our
work to support vulnerable New Yorkers.

My name is Gary P. Jenkins and I am the
Commissioner of the New York City Department of
Social Services, where I oversee the Human Resources
Administration and the Department of Social Services.
Joining me today, as stated, are DSS First Deputy
Commissioner Jill Berry, HRA Administrator Lisa
Fitzpatrick, DHS Administrator Joslyn Carter, DSS
Chief Performance Planning and Financial Management
Officer Ellen Levine and DSS Chief of Staff Karen St.
Hilaire.

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
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2 Today, we will update the Committees on the
3 DSS/HRA/DHS Fiscal Year '23 Executive Budget and
4 highlight the many investments, several of which are
5 historic in scope, that the Adams Administration is
6 making to uplift communities across the five
7 boroughs. I am eager to return to discuss the
8 concrete steps that this Administration is taking in
9 this Executive Budget to fight income-inequality,
10 poverty and homelessness.

11 As I've mentioned before, this work is deeply
12 personal to me. I know firsthand the impact that our
13 agencies' programs have on our clients and families.
14 We are often the safety net of the safety net for
15 many vulnerable New Yorkers, and this budget ensures
16 that we have the services needed to support them.
17 Before we discuss our Executive Budget, I would like
18 to provide a brief overview of the State landscape
19 and its impact on our agencies and clients. While we
20 continue to advocate for the State to pay its fair
21 share for critical resources to support the City in
22 its efforts to reduce homelessness, we were pleased
23 that this year's enacted State budget included much-
24 needed resources for the Emergency Rental Assistance
25 Program, better known as ERAP, and the Landlord

1
2 Rental Assistance Program, or LRAP. ERAP has been a
3 critical support for New Yorkers at risk of
4 experiencing homelessness or housing instability by
5 providing rental and utility arrears assistance, and
6 we strongly supported this timely investment which
7 couldn't come soon enough as the State's evictions
8 moratorium expired.

9 Moreover, the state, the final State budget also
10 included adjustments to the State FHEPS rent level up
11 to the FMR, with year over year adjustments to the
12 maximum rents. This initiative ensures that State
13 and City FHEPS rents are aligned and will help more
14 vulnerable New Yorkers with access to critical rental
15 support to avoid housing insecurity or potential
16 homelessness. Taking a look at Fiscal Year '23
17 Executive Budget, the plan includes funding for
18 critical areas in DSS/HRA/DHS, with some highlights
19 such as: adding funding for housing vouchers for
20 homeless and at-risk New Yorkers; additional
21 resources for emergency food programs; and as
22 announced a few weeks ago, an historic investment of
23 funds to expand street outreach programs and low-
24 barrier programs for New Yorkers experiencing
25 unsheltered homelessness.

1
2 Moreover, this budget will ensure that as we
3 continue to deal with the lingering impacts of the
4 pandemic and that our recovery is equitable and
5 inclusive of all New Yorkers, particularly those who
6 are often forgotten. In this administration we pride
7 ourselves on giving the most vulnerable members of
8 our community a seat at the table. It is important
9 to remind this committee and the public that the
10 Department of Social Services is made up of two
11 agencies, HRA and DHS. During the Preliminary Budget
12 hearing earlier this year, I provided this committee
13 with an overview of HRA programs and services. I
14 would like to do so again.

15 Due to the challenges around homelessness, HRA
16 can sometimes be overshadowed by its smaller sibling
17 agency—DHS, despite its nearly \$11 billion budget.
18 The Executive Budget will allow HRA to continue to
19 provide essential services and supports to New
20 Yorkers in need, through programs and services such
21 as: Education, training, and job placement services
22 to assist low-income New Yorkers in obtaining stable
23 employment.

24 HRA's Career Services offer Cash Assistance
25 clients opportunities to provide them to increase

1
2 their job skills and to provide and build a career
3 that will lead to successful and financial security.
4 HRA's Career Services works closely with clients to
5 find opportunities that match their skills, needs,
6 and career goals, and help them towards opportunities
7 to grow and build a successful career. Career
8 Services serves more than 70,000 job seekers
9 annually.

10 Cash Assistance to meet basic human needs.
11 Provides Cash Assistance benefits to families with
12 children and adults without children under the Family
13 Assistance and Safety Net Assistance programs. As of
14 March 2022, there were 413,376 people in
15 approximately 228,000 households receiving Cash
16 Assistance.

17 Rental assistance to prevent and reduce
18 homelessness. Our rental assistance programs help
19 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness move out of
20 shelter and into stable housing by providing monthly
21 rent supplements. Since 2014, DSS/HRA and DHS have
22 helped more than 189,000 New Yorkers secure housing
23 or remain in their homes using City rental assistance
24 and federally funded vouchers and public housing
25 units. SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps, provide

1
2 food assistance to over 1.72 million low-income New
3 Yorkers including families, people who are aging and
4 people with disabilities, as of March 2022.

5 This program helps families and individuals
6 incorporate nutritious foods in their diets. EFAP
7 provides funding for more than 500 soup kitchens and
8 food pantries citywide. In Fiscal Year 2021, EFAP
9 distributed a total of 13,767,104 lbs. of food. The
10 breakdown is as follows: 12,922,338 lbs. of shelf-
11 stable food and 844,716 lbs. of frozen food. Adult
12 Protective Services to assist adults with mental
13 and/or physical disabilities.

14 The Adult Protective Services Program, or APS,
15 provides services for physically and/or mentally
16 impaired adults. APS works with at-risk clients live
17 safely at homes and APS can be referred by anyone.
18 HRA's Medical Assistance Program helps a segment of
19 vulnerable and qualified New Yorkers enroll in
20 Medicaid public health insurance programs. HRA
21 accepts applications from residents who are age 65 or
22 over, persons of any age who are living with a
23 disability or blindness, persons who are in receipt
24 of Medicare and not a parent or caretaker relative of
25

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2 minor children, and former foster young adults under
3 age 26.

4 Other New Yorkers can apply for Medicaid and
5 other public health insurance through the New York
6 State Department of Health portal. Survivors of
7 domestic violence may receive temporary housing,
8 emergency shelter, and supportive services for
9 themselves and their children. All programs provide
10 a safe environment as well as counseling, advocacy
11 and referral services.

12 HIV/AIDS Services Administration, or HASA,
13 assists individuals with AIDS or HIV illness to live
14 healthier, more independent lives. HASA clients
15 receive ongoing case management and are assigned a
16 case workers at one of our HASA centers, located in
17 all five boroughs. As of March 2022, the HASA
18 caseload was 32,958. HRA's Office of Child Support
19 Services serves custodial and non-custodial parents,
20 both mothers and fathers and guardians, including
21 young parents, regardless of income or immigration
22 status, lifting tens of thousands of New York City
23 children out of poverty every year.

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3 Child Care for Cash Assistance employed families
4 and for Cash Assistance participants engaged in work,
5 school or training activities. This is to assist
6 low-income families in achieving self-sufficiency by
7 guaranteeing the child care subsidies needed to
8 maintain employment or engagement. Home care
9 programs are Medicaid-funded long-term-care programs
10 designed to help elderly or disabled individuals
11 remain safely at home, rather than in a nursing home.

12 As of March 2022, there were 234,073 total
13 homecare cases, the majority of whose care is managed
14 by New York State Department of Health. Our Home
15 Energy Assistance Program, also known as HEAP, is a
16 federally funded program that helps low-income
17 homeowners or renters pay for heating related utility
18 or fuel costs, heating equipment repair or
19 replacement, and cooling equipment and installation,
20 if eligible.

21 Legal services to assist New Yorkers facing
22 instability. Since 2014 through 2021, over 574,000
23 New Yorkers had received free legal representation or
24 assistance in eviction and other housing-related
25 matters through legal programs administered by DSS.

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IDNYC to ensure that every New Yorker has access to a safe, secure and trusted form of identification, regardless of immigration status. Managed by DSS in close collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, IDNYC is the largest and most successful municipal ID program in the nation, with 1.45 million cardholders. IDNYC benefits all city residents, including New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, the formerly incarcerated, and others who may have difficulty obtaining other government-issued photo IDs, and we ask for your help in promoting IDNYC and its many benefits to your constituents.

Burial assistance which provides financial assistance to New Yorkers in need to meet funeral and burial-related expenses; and Fair Fares to provide low-income New Yorkers with assistance for transportation costs. With the Fair Fares NYC discount, participating New York City residents can receive a 50 percent discount on either subway or eligible bus fares, or Access-A-Ride. There are approximately 270,000 individuals enrolled in the program.

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2 Next, I would like to outline the major
3 components of the DSS/HRA Executive budget, which
4 reflects this Administration's continued commitment
5 to improving our policies, programs, and operations
6 to address income inequality, fight poverty and
7 homelessness, and help New Yorkers recover in the
8 aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

9 The Fiscal Year 2023 Executive budget for HRA/DSS
10 is \$10.9 billion, of which \$8.6 billion are City
11 funds, with 12,945 positions, of which 10,093 are
12 City funded. The DSS/HRA Fiscal Year '23 budget
13 increased by \$119 million in total funds and \$107
14 million in City funds between the January and
15 Executive Plans due primarily to the tax levy
16 investments in the emergency food program, City FHEPS
17 rental assistance, supportive housing placement
18 resources as part of the Subway Safety Plan and Hart
19 Island Burial Operation.

20 Shifting to some of the major DSS/HRA
21 investments, we have the following: Emergency Food:
22 \$30 million in Fiscal Year '23 and FY24 for shelf
23 stable and fresh food purchases and delivery for the
24 Emergency Food Assistance Program, or EFAP, bringing
25 the total budget for EFAP to a record \$54 million;

1
2 Subway Safety Plan: Ten positions and \$5.8 million in
3 funding for supportive housing staff to expedite
4 client placements into housing units; Rental
5 Assistance: \$25 million in FY22 and \$118.5 million in
6 FY23 for City FHEPS rental assistance, which includes
7 budget increases related to the FMR; HIV/AIDS
8 Services Administration, or HASA, Housing: \$33
9 million in total funds and \$24 million in City funds
10 for HASA emergency and transitional housing in FY23;
11 Hart Island Operations: \$14 million in FY22 and \$11.9
12 million in FY23 for the Hart Island contract for
13 burial operations and maintenance; and Immigrant
14 Affairs: \$3.3 million in FY23 for the Office of
15 Immigrant Affairs to support Haitian and Ukrainian
16 communities in New York City.

17 Now, I would like to transition my testimony to
18 the Department of Homeless Services. DHS is
19 committed to preventing and addressing homelessness
20 across our city. The mission of DHS is to prevent
21 homelessness whenever possible, address street
22 homelessness, provide safe temporary shelter and
23 connect New Yorkers experiencing homelessness to
24 suitable permanent housing. We carry out this
25 mission with care and compassion for each client and

1
2 their circumstances. Moreover, our staff and
3 providers employ many innovative strategies to help
4 individuals who are in temporary shelter or are
5 unsheltered to come in off the streets and to
6 successfully transition to permanency.

7 We also remain committed to meeting our legal and
8 moral mandates to provide temporary emergency shelter
9 at request to all eligible New Yorkers in need. Our
10 staff and providers also help these individuals
11 access a variety of social services, employment
12 opportunities, work supports, public benefits and
13 housing, all to ensure a seamless transition back to
14 independent living and stability.

15 As we continue our discussion today, it is
16 important to contextualize the environment in which
17 we do this work. In recent years, New York City has
18 seen significant decreases in affordable housing. In
19 the decade between 2005 and 2015, household rents in
20 New York City increased by 18.4 percent, while at the
21 same time incomes failed to keep pace, increasing
22 only by 4.8 percent. Looking at affordable housing
23 supply, between 1994 and 2012, the city suffered a
24 net loss of about 150,000 rent-stabilized units.

1
2 As a result, by 2015, the city had insufficient
3 housing for millions of low-income New Yorkers.
4 These trends, along with an economy that leaves too
5 many living paycheck-to-paycheck, and in situations
6 that include domestic violence, overcrowding,
7 evictions, untreated mental health challenges and
8 inadequate discharge planning from mental health
9 institutions and state correctional facilities, have
10 resulted in homelessness and displacement throughout
11 the City. As these challenges persist, we are
12 steadily working to address the multifaceted drivers
13 of homelessness.

14 The Fiscal Year 2023 DHS Executive budget is \$2.4
15 billion, of which \$1.6 billion are City funds, with
16 2,012 positions, of which 1,991 are City funded. The
17 Fiscal Year '23 budget increased by \$206 million
18 since the Preliminary Plan. The change is primarily
19 due to over \$200 million in tax levy initiatives
20 added in the Executive Plan. Looking towards new DHS
21 needs, we see the following: Mayor Adams recently
22 announced an historic investment of \$171 million for
23 the Subway Safety Plan and Street Solutions, on top
24 of the \$3 million already allocated in the November
25 Plan. The \$171 million includes: \$140 million for

1
2 Stabilization Beds and Safe Havens; \$19 million for
3 New Drop-in Centers and Medical Services; \$12 million
4 for outreach, which includes 20 positions for
5 homelessness outreach at end-of-line subway stations;
6 client transportation; and client warming buses •
7 This investment funds the newly announced 1,400 beds,
8 as well as funding for beds brought on during the
9 pandemic that are currently funded with FEMA and will
10 continue operating with City funding in the baseline.

11 This investment is the largest increase in the
12 State budget and brings the overall Street Solutions
13 budget to an historic level of over \$300 million; and
14 \$32.8 million in total funds and \$20.3 million in
15 City funds for Prevailing Wage for contract Shelter
16 Security Staff in Fiscal Year '23. These
17 investments, coupled with the tireless work and
18 expertise of DSS/HRA/DHS staff and providers, will
19 help us create a more just City where no New Yorker
20 is left behind. We are leading with care and
21 compassion each day, and we are confident that our
22 budget plan lays out a blueprint that uplifts our
23 clients and promotes an equitable recovery for all
24 from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
25 The budget plan being presented by this

1
2 Administration will allow us to continue supporting
3 New Yorkers most in need. As I've said previously,
4 our frontline staff are out in our communities every
5 day serving clients and ensuring they have access to
6 the benefits and programs they deserve.

7 Each client that we help, whether it be by
8 connecting them to Cash Assistance, SNAP or a safe
9 place to take shelter, is a success. Before we close
10 today, I want to provide a top-level summary of our
11 work to recover from the pandemic. As I've said
12 before and I'm going to say it again, our city's
13 recovery over the last two years wouldn't be the same
14 without the commitment and expertise of our dedicated
15 staff and providers, many of whom were in the front
16 lines during the pandemic's peak supporting New
17 Yorkers in need. I am truly proud, blessed, and
18 honored to be their colleague.

19 HRA took several steps during the pandemic to
20 ensure our clients and New Yorkers in need could
21 access critical programs. For example, pursuant to
22 our aim to increase access to services, we worked
23 with our State colleagues to allow New Yorkers to
24 apply for Cash Assistance online and conduct
25 interviews via phone. Instead of needing to visit to

1
2 a center during the pandemic. DSS/HRA was able to
3 stand up this system in a week's time, which was made
4 possible by the successful blueprint our agencies
5 built when pioneering remote SNAP access via Access
6 HRA.

7 Moreover, following the passage of a state law
8 that we advocated for, we advocated for, this remote
9 Cash Assistance application and recertification is
10 now permanent, giving New Yorkers more access to
11 critical resources. At DHS, we mobilized all of our
12 efforts and resources to ensure the lives of our
13 clients and staff were safeguarded. At the
14 pandemic's outset, we followed the science and advice
15 of health experts to protect our sheltered and
16 unsheltered clients, and the data shows that our
17 actions and strategies worked, helping save lives and
18 limiting the spread of the virus. Among these
19 strategies, we de-densified our dormitory locations,
20 and opened isolation spaces for clients who tested
21 positive or were exposed to the virus. These steps,
22 along with our testing, tracing and vaccination
23 efforts, have helped protect the health and safety of
24 our clients.

1
2 As we close today, I want to highlight several
3 key takeaways from our presentation: The Fiscal Year
4 '23 Executive Budget plan makes critical investments
5 to support children, families and individuals, with
6 key programs like food support, and rental assistance
7 being funded and expanded in this plan; This budget
8 makes unprecedented investments, unmatched by any
9 prior Administration, to help New Yorkers
10 experiencing unsheltered homelessness come indoors
11 through low-barrier programs and supports; and
12 Lastly, we can't do this work alone. The
13 homelessness has been a decades-long challenge, and
14 we need every New Yorker to help us shoulder the fair
15 share of the responsibility to help shelter our
16 neighbors experiencing homelessness.

17 I appreciate the opportunity to present on the
18 Administration's Executive Budget plan and we look
19 forward to an informed discussion. Thank you, and I
20 welcome any questions that you have.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Commissioner. I
22 appreciate that. I want to get right into it. I
23 know you have a hard stop and I got a lot of
24 questions.

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2 Okay, so I want to talk about the federal grant
3 spending, the COVID-19 grant spending ARPA. So, by
4 the formula that was set forth in legislation, the
5 city received approximately \$5.8 billion in ARPA
6 state and local funding. The funds are required to
7 be spent or obligated by December 31st of 2024. So,
8 could you tell me, of the total amount allocated to
9 the city, how much has been allocated to each HRA and
10 DHS?

11 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Chair for your question
12 and an important question. I'm going to turn it over
13 to the Chief Program Officer – Financial Officer
14 Ellen Levine if we have that information available.
15 If not, we would definitely get back to you with
16 that.

17 ELLEN LEVINE: Yes, uhm, thank you Chair and
18 thank you Commissioner. I can provide you with what
19 we have allocated in each agency by funding source.
20 In DHS from Fiscal Years, this includes Fiscal Year
21 '21. We have \$1.6 billion in DHS that's comprised of
22 ARPA funding, COVID relief funding, FEMA funding,
23 COVID relief funding, FEMA funding for our emergency
24 hotel and streets programming, ESG coronavirus grant
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2 and a little bit of CDBG that was allocated to the
3 city.

4 In HRA, over the course of 21-25, we have \$505
5 million allocated as of the executive plan for
6 various programs.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Ellen. Can you
8 tell us of that funding, how much of it has been
9 spent so far?

10 ELLEN LEVINE: Well, for FY21, the current
11 modified budget as of the close is \$962 million in
12 DHS, so at this point, it is either liquidated or
13 receivable for us.

14 In FY22, which hasn't closed yet, our projection
15 as of the executive budget is \$587 million and we
16 expect to expand that entire amount. In HRA, the
17 amount overall for FY22 is a little above \$250
18 million and that is the projection for this year.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

20 GARY JENKINS: And Chair, our goal and aim is not
21 to leave any money on the table.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure, I bet. Okay, so the
23 federal relief funding that was used for baselined
24 programs. So, in the Executive Plan, there's a
25 federal pandemic relief funding reflected for ongoing

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baseline programs for DHS and COVID budget codes.
For HRA, uhm, a total of \$28.8 million is reflected
for EFAP and legal services. For DHS, a total of \$19
million is reflected for street homeless programs.
Uhm, and OMB indicated at their preliminary budget
hearing that they would work with the agencies to
determine which initiatives currently funded with
federal money will need to be funded in the outyears.
So, does DSS plan to adjust the funding sources or
their budget codes for these expenses in future
financial plans?

GARY JENKINS: Yes Chair, so we will continue as
we always do and will, work with OMB as we evaluate
the budget and look at our needs and be in close
conversation with them as well.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, so can you then
confirm that starting in Fiscal '26 that funding for
these ongoing programs will continue to be reflected
in HRA and DHS's budgets?

GARY JENKINS: If you don't mind Chair, I can get
back to you with that information. I just want to
make sure I'm giving you the accurate information as
we continue that plan.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, yeah, because if so,
3 uhm, we just want to know what funding streams would
4 be used.

5 GARY JENKINS: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I want to ask a
7 question about – that's very important to the speaker
8 as well as many of the colleagues and myself, the
9 hotel shelter conversions.

10 So, is the city pursuing the possibility of
11 converting hotel shelters into permanent affordable
12 housing?

13 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Chair for that really
14 important question. As you now the Mayor has said,
15 that is definitely a vision if his to convert hotels
16 into permanent housing. To working with our Chief
17 Housing Officer Jessica Katz and with the state, we
18 are still planning and hopeful that you know the laws
19 can allow us to convert those hotels into permanent.
20 So, we're still in discussion and that is still a
21 goal of this administration.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And I know there's
23 currently the proposed state legislation that would
24 authorize any dwelling permitted for occupancy as a
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2 Class B hotel to allow occupancy for permanent
3 residents purposes as well.

4 Has the administration provided its support for
5 this legislation?

6 GARY JENKINS: Yes, the Administration definitely
7 has provided support and we also welcome the support
8 of the City Council Members as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah sure. Uhm, and I
10 guess, do you have an estimate on how much it would
11 cost per unit for these hotel to affordable housing
12 conversions?

13 GARY JENKINS: Yeah, that's more of a question,
14 we have to have a discussion with the Chief Housing
15 Officer.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, so we don't even have
17 like a back of the envelope idea?

18 GARY JENKINS: I'm not saying we don't have. I
19 don't have it today with me but I know we have a
20 discussion with our City Hall counterparts and the
21 Chief Housing Officer.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, because in the
23 Council's budget response, we called on the
24 administration to reallocate funds from the agencies
25 baseline budget towards the process of converting

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2 these units. So, we'd like to know how much — I know
3 the Mayor supports it. We'd like to know how much
4 realistically it would cost.

5 Uhm, I want to talk about the end of line
6 homeless outreach services. I represent an end of
7 line district and street homeless outreach efforts on
8 end of line train stations continue to be an area of
9 concern. We see people experiencing homelessness
10 gathering in these stations, especially stations that
11 have longer you know layovers, which are the end of
12 line stations. So, how much of the funding added in
13 the Executive plan for street homeless services is
14 allocated to end of line outreach efforts?

15 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Chair. So, out of the
16 171 million historic investment, \$12 million is for
17 additional outreach. As I said in my testimony, it
18 includes an additional 20 positions. Again, we, you
19 know I commend the staff who are out there in the
20 mornings, during the day overnight, really reaching
21 out to our homeless individuals, our unsheltered
22 individuals to built that trust and really garner the
23 trust for them to come inside and receive the
24 services that they so deserve. As the Mayor has
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2 mentioned plenty of times, there's no dignity living
3 on the streets or living in the Subway system.

4 So, this administration has really taken a keen
5 eye and focus to build that trust and bring
6 individuals in. That's not going to stop. We're not
7 going to turn our backs on our brothers and sisters.
8 We're going to make sure that we remain engaged and
9 really build that trust with our homeless
10 individuals.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Just on average
12 anecdotally, how many times does an outreach worker
13 have to engage with someone experiencing homelessness
14 before they come in off the street?

15 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Chair. It really
16 varies. It depends, you know we look at each person
17 as an individual. So, each individual, whatever
18 their circumstances are, dictates you know, when they
19 are willing to accept our services. But we don't
20 give up. It may take one contact. It may take two.
21 It may take ten but the goal is to eventually build
22 that trust, so that person eventually accepts our
23 services and we're seeing it every night.

24 Every night at the end of line. I was just out
25 the night before at South Street and you see these

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2 individuals as we speak with them and talk to them,
3 really accept our services and say yes, I want to go
4 in and we transport them into in our system because
5 that's the opportunity to start really getting the
6 services they deserve. But the end result is getting
7 them into permanent or supportive housing.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Uhm, I mean, do you think
9 that there should be a way to get people off the
10 street, even if they don't want to get off the
11 street?

12 GARY JENKINS: I mean, Chair, you know we want to
13 treat people with dignity and respect right. I don't
14 want to "drag someone in." We want to build that
15 trust and really get that understanding of what their
16 circumstances are and then what services they need to
17 be on that path to stability.

18 So, that's what the staff, that's what we do each
19 and every day is really just building that trust and
20 getting folks to come in off the streets and out of
21 the Subway system.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So you said there's 20
23 positions right. Have they all been filled or are we
24 still hiring?

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GARY JENKINS: We are in the process of hiring.

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You know it's a really tough job as you know. A lot

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of jobs across the nation you know folks are taking

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other opportunities but we're still out there

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aggressively promoting the program and really looking

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for dedicated individuals to do this specific type of

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work.

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CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, since the Mayor

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announced the Subway Safety Plan, could you tell us

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how many homeless individuals that end of line

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stations have accepted placement?

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GARY JENKINS: So, according to the last data

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match that we've done, it's been over I believe it's

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over 700 individuals accepted our services to come

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in.

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CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And then how is that

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tracked then? Like do we know how many of those 700

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folks, then as they move on through our system, how

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do we know how many of those folks might be back on

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the street or have gotten into a supportive housing

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program or whatever it may be?

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GARY JENKINS: So, I would say Chair you know,

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our main focus and goal is as I said earlier, is

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garnering that trust with them because once they come

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2 in, you know we consider that a positive because
3 again, it gives us an opportunity to understand what
4 these circumstances are and it also provides an
5 opportunity to give them the services that they
6 deserve.

7 So, what we look at, they come in, if they do go
8 back out, at least now they're exposed and they're
9 aware. The services are here and the city is willing
10 and ready and able to provide the services to them.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I want to keep moving
12 along, so I give time for the Deputy Speaker and my
13 colleagues. So, quickly, the state to city caused
14 shift for the PHEPS rental assistant voucher. What
15 does HRA estimate will be the annual cost of this
16 increase to the city?

17 GARY JENKINS: Yeah, so the cost shift, you know
18 that was something that you know we are very
19 concerned about because it really provided an
20 opportunity for the city to really look at a
21 population that we could not currently serve. So, we
22 are evaluating and looking. I'm not sure if Ellen
23 has specific data but it is concerning to us.

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CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Because I'd like to know if HRA has identified any other noncity sources that can fund the increase?

GARY JENKINS: Well, Chair, definitely open to having a discussion with you and other members of the Council to see how and if we can identify other sources. Ellen, you had something to add?

ELLEN LEVINE: Certainly Commissioner thank you. Uh, the cost shift is actually not apparent in the current year or the coming few years because what the state has required is that the city use the new funding for people not eligible for city funded or other funded rental assistance. Use that money, it was about \$67 million allocated to the city in the last state budget. We have to use that money instead of state funds for the FMR increase. Therefore there is no city tax levy cost shift currently. There could be in the far future.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Do you know Ellen - would you be able to tell us what the current number of households are using the FHEPS vouchers?

ELLEN LEVINE: Well, this is State FHEPS that this applies. So, uhm, that's not a voucher program,

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2 it's a public assistance program and there are about
3 10,000 families right now in the State FHEPS program.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Yeah, obviously
5 we're concerned because the state budget didn't
6 include the provision for any state funding to
7 support this increase. So, now it's on us and you
8 know we got to work together here.

9 GARY JENKINS: Yeah Chair, definitely looking
10 forward to working together with you and others.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Uhm, okay, last question
12 and then I'm going to kick it to the Deputy Speaker.
13 So, just on staffing and systems for benefits
14 processing, uhm, in our budget response, we called on
15 the administration to ensure HRA has adequate
16 staffing for the timely review and processing of
17 public assistance benefits, supportive housing,
18 rental vouchers. Uhm, what is HRA doing to
19 streamline this process just to improve timeliness?

20 GARY JENKINS: So Chair, yes, working with OMB
21 and really pleased that we received authorization to
22 hire our additional staff, so as I say we have butts
23 in seats in order to provide the critical services to
24 New Yorkers who apply for us.

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2 So, under you know Administrator Fitzpatrick
3 jurisdiction, we're working to look at how do we
4 streamline our processes with supportive housing?
5 With working with our sibling agencies, HPD, DOHMH,
6 with our state oversight to look at the processes?
7 What are the "rules" and which rules can we adjust to
8 make that process a little easier and simpler for our
9 clients who apply and be eligible for those programs.

10 So, we constantly are meeting with our sibling
11 agencies but we're also looking internally within our
12 supportive housing to look at opportunities to
13 streamline but then look at opportunities. How do we
14 cut down that timeline for when a person is eligible
15 to when a person actually moves into a supportive
16 housing unit? That's ongoing.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, that's great. I mean
18 do you think uhm, it's a staffing issue? Are there
19 technology or system upgrades that are necessary? Is
20 it a little bit of both?

21 GARY JENKINS: We're looking at the entire
22 landscape. So, we're looking at the staffing, again,
23 you know we received the approval to hire additional
24 staffing. In supportive housing, we're looking at
25 our automation because we recognize there are some

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2 manual processes in place. So, the funding that was
3 approved, we're going to upgrade and update our
4 automation system, so that way it makes it easier for
5 a client to eligibility to occur. So, if we don't
6 have to ask a client again for a particular document,
7 it could just be a simple match. So, through that
8 automation, that is the expectation that's going to
9 come out of that process.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, I appreciate that. I
11 mean, I think you know we talk a lot about building
12 trust. It's such a - it's the crucks really of this
13 work and I think that people trusting in the system
14 once we get them into the system is so important and
15 a lot of times if they're frustrated by bureaucracy,
16 it's just as bad as them not feeling safe in a
17 shelter if they feel they're getting the runaround.

18 So, that's important and we want to, we want to
19 partner with you there however we can. So, I might
20 have more later but I'm going to kick it now to the
21 General Welfare Chair Deputy Speaker Ayala for more
22 questions. Thank you Commissioner.

23 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Diana, it's all you.
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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, thank you. Uhm, good
3 morning everyone again. Uhm, so my first question is
4 regarding the HRA's rental assistance budget
5 proposal. So, for the past several fiscal years, the
6 actual spending on rental assistance vouchers
7 program, have been considerably higher than the
8 baseline budget. Starting in the fall of 2021, and
9 this is related to what Council Member Brannan was
10 talking about. The City FHEPS voucher rates were
11 increased to match Section 8 levels. But at the
12 Preliminary Budget, funding for the increase was only
13 added for Fiscal Year 2022. In this budget response,
14 the Council called on HRA to adjust the baseline
15 budget for rental assistance to a level that more
16 accurately reflects the full need of the funding for
17 the vouchers. Could you tell us how much of the
18 funding will go towards the voucher rate increase and
19 how much will go toward each of the different rental
20 assistance programs?

21 GARY JENKINS: So, thank you Deputy Speaker and
22 thank you for that question. We are really excited
23 that you know, we received additional funding for our
24 rental assistance program. But as always and this is
25 not a new process for us. We always remain in close,

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2 constant contact with OMB because we evaluate as we
3 go along. Evaluate in the budget to ensure that
4 proper funding is there. There's never been and I've
5 been with the agency for over 30 years, there was a
6 lack of funding for rental assistance. That's
7 definitely not going to occur with me being the
8 Commissioner for DSS. We're going to make sure that
9 we stay in contact with OMB. We're going to make
10 sure even before then, that we closely monitor our
11 spending and what's in the budget. So, that's going
12 to continue to occur.

13 Ellen, I don't know if you want to give any
14 specifics regarding, but if not, uhm, Deputy Speaker,
15 again, we're going to closely monitor and we've never
16 had an issue where we did not have funding for rental
17 assistance.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do you know how much -
19 Commissioner, do you know how much of the Executive-
20 because the Executive Plan asks \$25 million in Fiscal
21 Year '22 and \$118.5 million in Fiscal Year 2023. How
22 is that funding broken down in regards to voucher
23 rate increases and rental assistance programs?

24 GARY JENKINS: Ellen you want to give a breakdown
25 please?

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2 ELLEN LEVINE: We did not fund this with that
3 level of specificity. Rather it takes into account
4 the gradual increase of rent levels due to the FMR.
5 It doesn't happen all at once. So, it's inclusive of
6 both the ongoing class as well as the rent increases
7 that we expect to see.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Is the number of vouchers
9 infinite or do we have a set number of vouchers
10 available for families?

11 ELLEN LEVINE: Uhm, we - may I answer that
12 question?

13 GARY JENKINS: Yes, yes.

14 ELLEN LEVINE: We do not have a set number
15 because eligible families in shelter and to a certain
16 extent in the community are vouchered and eligible
17 for the program without a quota of vouchers.

18 GARY JENKINS: So, Deputy Chair, we would never
19 have cap. If one is eligible for the subsidy, then
20 they will receive that subsidy and again, that's in
21 close evaluation of our budget and then working with
22 OMB when needed.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, that it means that it was
24 - it also means that the budget will be fluctuating
25 you know throughout the year. Uhm, which you know is

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2 fine. I mean listen, as long as the Voucher program
3 you know exits, I'm happy.

4 Uhm, can you tell us what the actual expenditures
5 have uh, - actual expenditures have continued to
6 outpace the baseline budget for many years. Why
7 wasn't a baseline increase for rental assistance
8 added to the executive plan?

9 GARY JENKINS: You know when we're preparing the
10 budget and we're looking at our funds, you know, we
11 know that for this Fiscal Year and we look at Fiscal
12 Year '24, when I say Fiscal Year, Fiscal Year '23 and
13 '24, we ensure that we have the funding there. When
14 we look at baseline, you know that comes with further
15 discussion and working with the Council to be honest
16 to determine, how do we get those funds to be
17 baselined?

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, so you feel you have
19 sufficient funding to meet the need?

20 GARY JENKINS: Well, like again, we're definitely
21 going to work with OMB to ensure that we have
22 sufficient funding. If there's a need, then we
23 collaborate. We have a discussion and we make sure
24 that you know the funding is available for New
25 Yorkers.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Can you tell us how many
3 shelter moveouts occurred in April with the City
4 FHEPs voucher or maybe March?

5 GARY JENKINS: Give me one second, let me see if
6 I have that here. Give me one second. So, the most
7 recent data we have is for February, where there was
8 489 City FHEPS moveout from DHS Shelters.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, do you know what the
10 number of applications is to date?

11 GARY JENKINS: Uhm, to date, I have to get back
12 to you on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, thank you. Uhm, okay,
14 so for the past several fiscal years, actual spending
15 on HASA SRO's has been around \$60 million, which is
16 considerably higher than the baseline budget of \$16.6
17 million. After the budget is adopted each year, each
18 fiscal year, the agency has been adding funding
19 throughout the years to meet the actual need.
20 Through fiscal year 2022 only, HRA added \$47.9
21 million. In its budget response, the Council calls
22 for the Administration to add funding to the baseline
23 budget for HASA SRO's to reflect the full need more
24 accurately. The executive plan, has \$33.8 million in
25 Fiscal Year 2023 only, bringing the budget for that

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2 year up to \$50.4. Is HRA anticipating the actual
3 expenditures for HASA would lower the layout in
4 recent years or is the agency planning to add more
5 funding for Fiscal Year 2023 in a future financial
6 plan?

7 GARY JENKINS: So, again Deputy Speaker, we are
8 closely monitoring. You know we do project but if
9 additional funding is needed for a particular program
10 area for our most vulnerable, we have that
11 conversation with OMB. But again, we don't
12 anticipate that occurring but we will be closely
13 monitoring.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, but actual expenditures
15 have exceeded \$16.6 million baseline budget for many
16 years. Why wasn't the additional funding added to
17 the Fiscal 2024 and in the outer years?

18 GARY JENKINS: Well, again, you know we're
19 definitely as you can understand and respect, you
20 know the city's definitely in a fiscal crisis but
21 that's not going to take away from the services that
22 we offer to our clients and benefits that they
23 deserve.

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2 So, again, if the need arises, we will have that
3 conversation with OMB to ensure that we could
4 continue to provide those services.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: For sure. In Fiscal Year
6 2023 Preliminary Budget, a savings of \$49 million in
7 Fiscal Year 2023 and it's outer years was reflected
8 as part of the DHS commitment to no longer shelter
9 children with families in hotels and DHS has
10 testified at a preliminary budget hearing, that no
11 families with children are currently residing in
12 hotels. The Council has been alerted that DHS is
13 still soliciting hotels to shelter individuals and
14 families. Is DHS once again relying on hotels to
15 shelter homeless families? And if so, how many
16 families with children are currently housed in
17 hotels?

18 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Deputy Speaker for that
19 question and I can say confidently that we do not
20 have any children in commercial hotels. We recognize
21 that that was not the appropriate setting and so, to
22 serve clients with children, we are not planning.
23 That is not our attempt to repopulate commercial
24 hotels with families with children. And I say that

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2 Administrator Carter want to add on here but I know
3 we stand strong and that is not our intent.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay.

5 GARY JENKINS: Administrator Carter.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes, did you want to add?

7 JOSLYN CARTER: No Commissioner, I was just going
8 to support what you said. Absolutely Deputy Speaker,
9 we do not have families with children in hotels.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Uhm, regarding the prevailing
11 wages, in Fiscal Year 2022 adopted – in the Fiscal
12 2022 Adopted Budget Plan, \$40.5 million was added to
13 DHS's budget for Fiscal Year 2022 only pursuant to
14 the legislative requirement to provide the prevailing
15 wage for shelter security guards at DHS run shelters.

16 In the budget response, the Council called on the
17 Administration to add funding to the baseline budget
18 to fully support the prevailing wage increase going
19 forward. The Executive Plan adds \$33.9 million in
20 Fiscal Year 2023 only. Does DHS anticipate that they
21 funded added will fully meet the need for Fiscal Year
22 2023?

23 GARY JENKINS: Deputy Speaker, we are going to
24 meet the need of this requirement for prevailing wage
25 and again, we will work with OMB as needed but I have

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2 not seen any indication at all in my conversations in
3 my evaluation of prevailing wage that we won't be
4 able to meet it.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Does the agency anticipate
6 being able to claim additional noncity funding
7 towards this to help fund this need?

8 GARY JENKINS: Well, again, if the need arises, I
9 look forward to working with the Council to identify
10 funds and any ideas that you may have and others,
11 welcome to those discussions.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Question on Heart Island.
13 The Executive Plan adds \$14 million in Fiscal Year
14 2022 and \$11.9 million and nine positions in Fiscal
15 Year 2023 and in outer years for more items
16 operations and maintenance. What will this funding
17 support?

18 GARY JENKINS: Thank you for that question. That
19 funding supports, we have a contractor which we put
20 out an RFP selected organization that's providing
21 services on Heart Island in regards to you know up
22 hearing the graves for our deceased, managing the
23 grounds there, ensuring that you know it's a proper
24 and respectful barrier grounds and we work in
25 collaboration with our sibling agent, the Parks

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2 Department and to ensure that the beautification of
3 that island is appropriate when families visit their
4 deceased loved ones.

5 In addition, we're looking at the appropriateness
6 of doing additional burials on the island, so we have
7 a contract as well doing an assessment to determine
8 how much more can we occupy the island.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, will HRA continue to work
10 with DOC? Because my understanding is that it makes
11 from Rikers Island have historically worked Heart
12 Island. How is that going to change?

13 GARY JENKINS: That relationship was discontinued
14 last year Deputy Speaker. Who has responsibility of
15 that island is the Human Resources Administration in
16 conjunction with the New York City Parks Department.
17 So, we don't have a relationship. DOC does not have
18 a relationship to the island any longer.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, whose been maintaining
20 the island since the relationship was resolved?

21 GARY JENKINS: That is our contractor that's
22 responsible for the island.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I really appreciate that.
24 I've actually you know, so many New Yorkers you know
25 have been buried there without you know proper access

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for family members to go and visit and it's really, this has been heartbreaking, so I'm really happy to you know to be in a place where we are finally you know making sure that that happens and that when families are in fact visiting, that you know that there is attention being paid to the conditions of those grave sites because people deserve to be buried with dignity and their family members should feel that when they are in you know, in that space.

GARY JENKINS: I absolutely agree with you Deputy Speaker. Just on a personal note, you know I have a brother who is buried there, so when I went to visit it was deeply personal to me and for me and I want to make sure that families who go visit is visiting a place that really signifies the city cares in a dignified and respectful way.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, I appreciate that and I look forward to visiting soon. In regards to the Fair Fares Program, the City Council has long been a champion of the Fair Fares Program and we are very pleased to see that it was baselined in the preliminary plan. We would like more details on the spending and the metrics of the program. What is the current number of active and enrolled clients? And

1
2 what is the number of existing HRA clients who
3 qualify for the program?

4 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Deputy Speaker. We are
5 really proud of the Fair Fares program as well and
6 want to thank the Speaker, for City Council and of
7 course our Mayor Adams for ensuring that the funding
8 was put into the budget for Fair Fares and actually
9 baselined. So, we're excited about that opportunity.
10 We continue to do outreach to individuals that's on
11 known to us within our system or cash assistance on
12 stamp. We're working with ethnic media. We have a
13 robust campaign that's in process right now through
14 social media. Working with MTA to ensure that
15 individuals are aware that the Fair Fares program
16 exists and we're encouraging you know members of the
17 City Council to also promote that program as they
18 interact with your constituents who potentially could
19 be our clients.

20 So, we continue to really be for that program as
21 you have different events, we want to be out there in
22 the communities, especially now that the weather is
23 breaking and we have different street fairs. We want
24 to be the outreach team. We want to be involved and
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1
2 be in the communities highlighting Fair Fares in
3 addition to IDNYC.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm going to hold you to
5 that.

6 GARY JENKINS: Oh, no, definitely. Hold me to
7 it. I want to be out there as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So do we know what the number
9 of active enrolled clients is?

10 GARY JENKINS: We do. Let me get that for you.

11 JILL BERRY: Commissioner, I can say it's 277,000
12 people are currently enrolled.

13 GARY JENKINS: Thank you First Dep.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, do we know what the
15 actual spending for Fiscal Year '22 has been so far?

16 ELLEN LEVINE: I believe it is \$37 million
17 through March.

18 GARY JENKINS: That is correct. That's correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Regarding the
20 Right to Counsel program, I know that we've been uh,
21 services we've had ongoing discussions about this
22 that really obviously you know the concerns about you
23 know the state of evictions in New York City. During
24 the General Welfare Committee's hearing in February
25 regarding the impact of the end of the eviction

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moratoria, we heard from many providers and activists that the city's Right to Counsel Program does not have adequate bandwidth to deal with the expected increase in eviction cases and demand for legal services. Since then, several contracted legal service providers have stopped taking on new cases because they are unable to keep up with the drastic increase in individuals seeking anti-eviction legal services.

This could lead many low income New Yorkers without legal representation during court proceedings. What is HRA doing to ensure that contracted legal service providers are able to meet the services as the demand increases? And how many providers have told HRA that they can no longer accept new clients?

GARY JENKINS: Thank you for that question Deputy Speaker. We are really extremely proud of our Right to Counsel program, which is under the Office of Civil Justice within DSS. And we know that having legal representation for our clients for low-income New Yorkers only yield positive results when you have an attorney there to really understand the processes that's a legal process. So, working with our

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2 providers, understanding that they also; they have
3 challenges as I said earlier. They're no different
4 then the rest of the nation, any other employment
5 sector with keeping and retaining talent within their
6 organizations.

7 So, we recognize that case management is a
8 challenge for our providers. We're working closely
9 with our legal providers but we're also working
10 closely with the Office of Court Administrations to
11 ensure that when a case comes before a judge, that we
12 have legal representation if they qualify. If at
13 that time, we're making all attempts to get that case
14 adjourned and I will say the vast majority of those
15 cases are being adjourned and it gives DSS, OCJ an
16 opportunity to ensure that a legal service provider
17 is with that client during that legal proceeding.

18 So, we continue to work with OCJ. We continue to
19 work with OCA, Office of Court Administration and we
20 continue to work with our clients and Office of Court
21 Administration to ensure that our clients have proper
22 representation.

23 So, you know, working with the providers, we're
24 ensuring that hey, how do we meet the goal? How do
25 we work with you in conjunction with the state OCA?

1
2 That's a current, on a regular daily basis and I say
3 daily because we're in close contact with our
4 providers, with the court. The court let us know
5 which cases are coming up and then we're working with
6 our legal service providers to ensure that we can
7 have representation for those clients.

8 Then going a little deeper, we're looking at
9 cases that should be discontinued because the rents
10 are already paid but cases are still on the books.
11 How can we get those cases moved out, so that we can
12 focus on the true cases that's needed. So, for
13 example, if a case, if a client applied for ERAP, we
14 know those are built in protections for that client.
15 So, we know until the state provides a decision on
16 that case, no eviction is going to happen.

17 So, let's look at those cases and put those to
18 the side, so we can actually see what are genuine
19 cases that we need to focus on to have legal
20 representation. So, we're doing that and we're doing
21 that like I said, on a daily consistent basis and
22 just having that open communication with our legal
23 service providers and with the Office of court
24 administration.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Happy to hear that. Uhm, and
3 you know I look forward to – I’m sure that we’ll be
4 having you know uh more discussions as we go along
5 the way.

6 Alright, uhm, I have one question regarding the
7 EFAP, the EFAP RFP. Actually no, before I ask that,
8 regarding the domestic violence shelter units,
9 according to HRA’s testimony during the oversight
10 hearing held on November 29th, regarding its DV
11 shelter system, 62 new tier two shelters was
12 scheduled to open at the end of calendar year 2021
13 and 105 new tier two units were scheduled to open in
14 Fiscal Year 2023.

15 As noted in the PMMR, one of HRA’s emergency DV
16 shelters closed during Fiscal 2021 resulting in the
17 loss of 74 beds. How many of the plan tier two units
18 have been open and if they are not all open, why not
19 and when will they open?

20 GARY JENKINS: So, thank you for that question.
21 We’re working closely with our DV providers to ensure
22 that you know those beds are online and available to
23 domestic violence survivors. Looking at the report I
24 have here, we’re definitely on track with opening. I
25 want to just be careful and not give you any

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2 misinformation and be able to follow-up with you to
3 let you know exactly what opened and then you know,
4 what is planned to be open within the near term.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, we look forward to
6 hearing those numbers. Regarding the pandemic
7 Medicaid savings, the family first corona virus
8 provided a 6.2 percent increase in federal matching
9 funds for the federal Medicaid assistance percentage
10 to during the pandemic emergency period. This
11 additional or enhanced payment referred to the ERAP
12 map has reduced the city's share of Medicaid costs
13 since the onset of the pandemic. Since the federal
14 public health emergency was extended through the
15 middle of July 2022, the city is also eligible but
16 FMAP service savings for the first nine months of
17 calendar year 2022. How much of the additional
18 savings is the city expected to receive for calendar
19 year 2022 and has the savings amount been verified
20 with the state?

21 GARY JENKINS: So, and Ellen can jump in. We are
22 definitely evaluating, as I said earlier. I am not
23 in the business of leaving any money on the table.
24 We're going to claim any funds that's available to
25 the city. We're going to make sure that we're taking

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advantage of it. That continues, that is going to be you know my focus as I'm in this seat, to ensure that you know any federal or state dollars that we're eligible for, that we are addressing them. Ellen, do you have anything to add?

ELLEN LEVINE: Chair or Co-Chair, uhm, that savings reduces the city's expenditures for Medicaid. It replaces it with federal dollars and some of that has been already reflected in financial plan. Uhm, you saw technical adjustments in the January plan and in the Executive Budget and that's an ongoing evaluation that OMB does to make sure that the city does reflect all those savings in our budget on an ongoing basis.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: In this budget response, the Council called on the Administration to increase baseline funding for EFAP. We were very pleased to see that the Executive Plan asked \$30 million in Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024. So, the current EFAP baseline of \$23.8 million. How does HRA determine – how did HRA determine this amount and how does HRA plan to decide where and how the additional resources will be allocated?

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GARY JENKINS: Thank you Deputy Speaker. We are excited as well. We share your excitement that you know monies were put into the Executive Plan for Fiscal Year '23 and '24. And it's an historic investment right. It's now 50, over \$50 million that we are able to provide food to our food pantries and soup kitchens. But more importantly, to eligible New Yorkers to ensure they have a nutritionist meal. And we're going to continue to work with our food pantries and soup kitchens to make sure that they have the needs and the wear with all to provide those services.

We're not going to back down in regards to ensuring that New Yorkers are receiving those – that critical nutrition meals within those communities and we're working closely. We just had a zone with over 100 participants just to get a better understanding of the services that we offer and actually how to apply for EFAP. We recognize for our program, there was a lack of awareness so to speak. And I say lack of awareness so to speak and I say lack of awareness, there were providers, smaller providers that was not aware how to apply for our EFAP program. So, we had that communication. We're going to have ongoing. It

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2 falls under First Deputy Commissioner Jill Berry. It
3 was a really good discussion and we made a commitment
4 that those discussions will be ongoing but again, the
5 answer to your question, we're excited that the \$50
6 million, over \$50 million is now in our executive
7 plan and we're going to continue to assess and
8 evaluate.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do you consider that
10 sufficient funding to incorporate some of the EFRED
11 you know benefits? Fresh, you know vegetables that
12 are you know being incorporated into the packages
13 that families are receiving? Because those packages
14 are really I mean, popular I know in my district and
15 the product was very you know, it was really good.

16 GARY JENKINS: Oh, totally agree with you and it
17 was in my district as well because I went to a couple
18 of food pantries just to observe and kind of get
19 feedback from the folks who were there to receive the
20 food. Uhm, when we put our EFAP RFP out, which we
21 just recently made a selection, that was part of the
22 requirement. That we had to have fresh produce,
23 fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the delivery
24 process. So, that's incorporated now because we took
25 those best practices from PFRED and we made sure we

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2 went to have it permanent within our EFAP program.
3 So, that's there and we're going to continue to
4 monitor but again, it's part of our ongoing process.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, I really appreciate
6 that and I'm sure that you know my constituents would
7 to. Obviously the food was you know was needed but
8 the quality of it, you know I'm always concerned
9 about what it is that we're feeding you know folks
10 and ensuring that they are getting the best quality
11 product that's out there and I believe that that's
12 exactly what we were getting through the PFRED. And
13 so, I look forward to ensuring that that is the case
14 with the new EFAP RFP process. And that this new
15 provider is in fact you know that we're getting the
16 same quality of food but regarding the RFP, you just
17 referenced that there had been a selection. Can you
18 tell us how many proposals were received? My
19 understanding is and just we've been getting reports
20 that for profit organization was selected as part of
21 the RFP process. I'm not too happy about that.
22 Could you explain a little bit?

23 GARY JENKINS: So, Deputy Speaker, I know we're
24 friends and I know you care about me and I care about
25 you. So, I don't want to get in any trouble with you

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2 know going against procurement rules. That I cannot
3 give like how many proposals were submitted because
4 that will be breaking procurement rules. So, I don't
5 want to get into any trouble.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: But someone was selected?

7 GARY JENKINS: An organization was selected and
8 that will be released shortly.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: What shortly? How do you
10 define shortly? A week? A month?

11 GARY JENKINS: How about before the end of this
12 week.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Oh, perfect.

14 GARY JENKINS: And I said this week on purpose
15 because I know today is Friday.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I mean that's perfect. Okay,
17 uhm, regarding this is my last question because I
18 want to make sure that colleagues have time and then
19 we have at 12.

20 In the budget response, the Council called on the
21 Administration to add funding to Safe Haven beds.
22 Stabilization beds, drop-in centers and outreach
23 programs to support the street homeless population.
24 We were very glad to see that the executive plan
25

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2 added \$5.6 million into school year 2022 and \$171.3
3 million in Fiscal Year 2023 and the outyears.

4 Uhm, can you provide a breakdown of what exactly
5 this new funding will support and uh, how many
6 additional beds of each type are expected to be open
7 in calendar year 2022 and 2023.

8 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Deputy Speaker. We also
9 as you know, we had discussions and you was at the
10 press conference with the Mayor. Really excited with
11 the historic investment that he placed into our
12 agency as it relates to our homelessness population.
13 So, again, out of the \$171 million historic
14 investment, \$140 million for dedicated to safe havens
15 and stabilization beds, \$19 million is for a drop-in
16 center in medical services and the \$12 million as I
17 said earlier, is for outreach, which includes the 20
18 positions for outreach at end of the line stations.

19 We are looking to – and assessing where we're
20 going to – how we're going to work with our elected
21 officials, our different community boards to
22 determine where these additional stabilization beds
23 and safe havens and drop in centers will be placed.
24 So, we're looking forward to a real good
25 collaborative conversation to ensure that we're

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meeting our goals. To ensure that these additional really valuable low barrier programs in these low barrier beds will be part of those communities. So, looking forward to that conversation and discussion as we get more information of course through our fair share, we're going to make sure that we communicate with you Deputy Speaker and with the Council Members on where these locations will be provided in the communities.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, do we know how many additional beds are expected to open in calendar year '22?

GARY JENKINS: Uhm, uhm Administrator Carter, do you have that information handy? I know we have it.

JOSLYN CARTER: Uhm, yes, Commissioner by the end of this year we should have, we've opened just over 400. We should have - we will meet the 500 goal. The additional will be 1,400. We have over 4,000 by the end of next year.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: By the end of next year, okay.

GARY JENKINS: Beautiful.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do you know what the average
3 cost per night is for the safe haven beds or a
4 stabilization bed?

5 GARY JENKINS: That we can get back to you Deputy
6 Speaker.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, perfect and I hope that
8 some of this funding is going towards, you know the
9 unintended consequences that come with you know
10 disrupting a persons you know current lifestyle, you
11 know we're breaking up encampments. We're going into
12 the train stations; we're you know moving people
13 around and you know my hope is right that they are
14 going into shelter and that they you know are feeling
15 safer in those environments, however, I don't 100
16 percent believe that that's what's happening. I
17 think that you know some people are being displaced.
18 I don't know what numbers. I don't want to you know
19 estimate that but I hope that some resources are
20 being allocated to identify those locations where
21 folks may be you know transitioning to. We saw that
22 a lot of that was happening within the public housing
23 developments where we for the first time, you know,
24 we're seeing photographic evidence of individuals
25 with full beds you know in the hallway areas of the

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2 housing developments and you know while I'm sure that
3 the residents are very sensitive to the needs of you
4 know these individuals, they you know, they're also
5 you know - they're having challenges right. They're
6 struggling with what is happening and the degree to
7 which this is occurring.

8 So, you know, and I say this also you know when
9 we're addressing the opioid crisis is that a lot of
10 the attention goes towards the treatment and not
11 enough of the attention goes into the impact on the
12 larger community. And there is an impact on the
13 larger community and you know we need to in order to
14 really truly address these issues, we need to
15 anticipate and have a plan for what may come as a
16 result of the work that we're trying to do.

17 So, I hope that you know some of these resources
18 are going there as well. Thank you for your
19 testimony today and I am going to pass it over to
20 staff to call on Council Members.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. We've also
22 been joined by Council Members Williams and Powers.
23 I'm going to remind Council Members to use the Zoom
24 raise hand function and I will call on you in the
25 order with which they were raised. Council Member

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2 questions are limited to five minutes. The order for
3 questions is Barron, Ossé, Brooks-Powers, Cabán and
4 Sanchez and Brewer.

5 We'll first start with Council Member Barron.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you very much. I
8 just want to comment before I get started that Chair
9 Brannan, you're always concerned about time and how
10 long there hearings are and how many we have to do,
11 yet you and the Chairs speak and ask questions for
12 over an hour. We get five minutes and then you
13 interrupt us and say we got to hurry up. Just wanted
14 to put that on record.

15 Good morning Commissioner Jenkins.

16 GARY JENKINS: Good morning Council Member
17 Barron. How are you sir?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How are you?

19 GARY JENKINS: I'm doing well. How are you?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm doing great. Just a
21 couple of questions because we have limited time, if
22 you all can jot down the questions rather than answer
23 them after each one because then my time will be run
24 out. But I do want to say -

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2 GARY JENKINS: We can definitely get back to you
3 sir with the responses.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, you can do it here.

5 GARY JENKINS: Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: We're going to take that
7 time.

8 GARY JENKINS: Okay.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Anyway, you know my
10 concern about the homeless situation. We live in a
11 capitalistic economy. A greedy capitalistic economy
12 that privatizes a lot of services and uses government
13 money for nonprofits, not so much not-for-profit but
14 no profit organizations. They make millions off of
15 our misery and homelessness. But this capitalistic
16 economy is causing greed to take precedence over
17 need. By the way, our Mayor loves capitalism but
18 any way, that's another topic.

19 It prioritizes greed over need. My concern is a
20 couple things. One, can we be clear because
21 according to the Finance Division's Briefing paper,
22 the Executive Budget has \$481 million less than the
23 budget from FY22 and they may say that's because of
24 the federal money being taken in and out but it's
25 less and how much damage would that do to services?

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2 Secondly, what is the number of homeless? I hear
3 all kinds of numbers. You know those in street,
4 those in the shelters, those wherever they are, what
5 is the total amount of people in homeless situations
6 and then, the removal of the - oh, and by the way,
7 are you sitting with the Mayor to make sure when his
8 commitment to building more affordable housing, that
9 we have a higher mandatory number for permanent
10 housing for the homeless. Because if we get up to 30
11 percent in ten years, we might be able to - or five,
12 ten years, we might be able to really reduce
13 homelessness tremendously.

14 The removal of the encampments was cruel. It was
15 cruel. I think it was for Wall Street, some of his
16 financial buddies, so that New York City will look
17 better as an investment than to have all of that but
18 this was private property of people who were severely
19 homeless and they're not going into the safe haven
20 stabilized beds.

21 A lot of them are not going to do that. So, I
22 think that was cruel. Uhm, the Department of
23 Homeless Services continually violates the Fair Share
24 Act. We are over saturated in East New York and
25 Brownsville and it continues to happen. They

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2 continue to build more shelters regardless of what we
3 say, the Fair Share Act.

4 And plus, what's the services for the homeless?

5 I know you list them. They sound good on paper.

6 They are not working in reality. And practice in
7 many homeless shelters, in particularly the mental
8 health services, they are having problems like in

9 some of the NYCHA developments, the homeless

10 population in public housing and it's causing

11 conflicts. How are they building their skills

12 dealing with their emotional needs and all of that.

13 I think that that has not been successful. And then

14 groups like Samaritan Village, they have \$100-\$250

15 million in revenue. They almost like nonprofit

16 poverty pimps off our misery and they have all of

17 this stuff they claim their doing and I know for a

18 fact because in some of them in my community, many,

19 because we are over saturated, and they're just not

20 providing the services that they say that they are.

21 And then finally, I want to say a compliment. I

22 know you're glad to hear that. I have to compliment

23 the agency. In my community, there was a homeless

24 shelter for family homeless shelter on Flatlands, 96

25 families, they wanted to move them out and spread

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2 them all over the place. All over the city and have
3 a woman shelter taken out of the hotel and put there.

4 We said no, we don't want to separate the
5 families like that. Not only did Commissioner Banks
6 and the agency not do that but they found 96 families
7 permanent housing for those families and I want to
8 highly, highly commend the agency for that. And
9 that's the kind of work we need to do. Thank you.

10 GARY JENKINS: You're welcome Council Member and
11 thank you or your questions.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 GARY JENKINS: I'm going to start off with, thank
14 you for your compliment on the agency and that is the
15 goal right, is to move our brothers and sisters into
16 permanent housing that they're eligible for.

17 So, that is the goal that I'm going to continue
18 on as the Commissioner for DSS. In regards to the
19 budget, you're absolutely on point. The reduction is
20 mainly related to the federal dollars. There's going
21 to be no interruption to services. The Mayor was
22 very clear to us that you know we have to ensure that
23 no cuts are to direct services or any type of client
24 services or layoffs. None of that was a touch, it
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2 was really primarily related to the federal dollars
3 that no longer is available to us.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Just one quick thing on
5 that. The federal dollars was \$481 million. I find
6 it hard to believe that that doesn't hurt nobody
7 because those were federal programs. That's hard to
8 believe but bad.

9 GARY JENKINS: Okay, in regards to the Fair
10 Share, absolutely agree with you. The mayor has
11 already directed us to look at our portfolio to see
12 where there's over saturation to see where there's
13 under saturation. We are evaluating that. I am
14 taking that into consideration because as you know
15 Council Member, this is a right to shelter city. If
16 we don't provide shelter to our homeless brothers and
17 sisters, than that put Commissioner Jenkins in
18 trouble. I don't want to go jail. I want to
19 continue to be out here, getting the work done on
20 behalf of New Yorkers. So, really looking forward to
21 working with the Council and all electeds to say,
22 yes, if there's over saturation, the Mayor said -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 GARY JENKINS: Look at that, that's to be a
25 consideration. I'm going to keep going because I

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2 heard them say the time is up. The services for
3 shelter, totally agree with you. Working with
4 Administrator Carter to look at those services. I
5 don't know if you know my story, at one point and
6 time, my family and I lived in the shelter, so I know
7 services are extremely important.

8 So, looking at how are we addressing services to
9 one, the adults but I'm really focused on those kids.
10 Because when I was in shelter, I don't recall any
11 attention being paid to my mental health. So, really
12 drilling down to say, our families who are
13 predominantly people of color, they deserve those
14 services. So, working with our providers and I have
15 to say, overall, our providers are good providers
16 Council Member. I've been meeting with them and
17 drilling down and asking those tough questions. I'm
18 going to continue doing that but they really do
19 provide great services.

20 Is there room for improvement? Absolutely,
21 there's always room. I'm identifying those gaps and
22 I'm filling those gaps.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, thank you very much
24 for your answers. Looking forward to meeting with
25 you. I'm going to have my office set up a meeting

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2 with you and we can locate some of the shelters in my
3 districts on Madison Avenue and Park Avenue and the
4 upper East Side of Manhattan. I have great locations
5 for you.

6 GARY JENKINS: Okay, I appreciate it Council
7 Member.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In Gale's District, Gale
9 Brewer's District.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
11 call on Council Member Ossé.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you so much and good
14 morning everyone. Good morning Commissioner.

15 GARY JENKINS: Good morning sir.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Nice to see you always. I
17 have a couple quick questions. The first one I have
18 is, you know a lot of the sentiments that I hear from
19 our unsheltered advocates and even those that are in
20 the shelter system. You know they are a little
21 hesitant to going into shelters, especially you know
22 those that are male and homeless because of the
23 congregate settings within the shelters and how that
24 can sometimes create dangerous situations. So, I
25 wanted to ask, is there any money in this budget for

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2 DHS if any, that's going towards retrofitting some
3 shelters that we have and to making them less
4 congregate and more you know single rooms for
5 individuals that are a little hesitant in going into
6 the shelters because of sometimes the dangerous
7 congregate settings?

8 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Council Member for that
9 question. Yes, so, as I mentioned earlier, the Mayor
10 made the historic investment of over \$170 million.
11 We're looking at creating and building more
12 stabilization and more safe havens. We recognize
13 some specific settings is more conducive to our
14 homeless individuals, because I'm looking at them as
15 individuals and not as a whole. Our traditional
16 dormitory style settings, may not be conducive for
17 some but as I said also, we are a right to shelter
18 city. So, we still have to ensure that we have
19 shelters and we're building shelters. The difference
20 in this administration Council Member, is that we're
21 building purpose built shelters. We don't want to
22 retrofit and just put people into a box and we know
23 it's a square.

24 So, we want to make sure that as we look and
25 we're working with our providers that the settings

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2 are appropriate. So, if it's appropriate, which is
3 not the whole dormitory style, which dormitory style
4 works for some but not for all but if it's purpose
5 built we recognize that's a better way to go.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Amazing, thank you so much
7 for that answer and just the other question that I
8 have is, how much of the budget is dedicated to
9 getting housing counselors and staff for the
10 shelters?

11 GARY JENKINS: So, that particular question, I
12 have to get back to you on and I will do that today.
13 Because I know we do have it but before I'm going to
14 see if one of my colleagues do have - if Ellen or
15 Joslyn has that number. Ellen.

16 ELLEN LEVINE: Well, uhm, I'll close it up. What
17 I would say Council Member is that the budgets for
18 all of our contracted providers do have allocations
19 for central services stats. On site, we do have case
20 managers, housing specialists, director social
21 service that are already built in to provide services
22 for those who are in site. So, that's already in the
23 budget right for those who are doing the services,
24 the same two providers. In terms of specifics, I
25 don't have a number.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSĚ: Alright, I would love to
3 get that number back by the end of the day. Thank
4 you so much. Thank you so much Commissioner.

5 GARY JENKINS: And Council Member, looking
6 forward to meeting with you as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSĚ: Yes, likewise.

8 GARY JENKINS: Okay.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
10 Next, we'll turn to Council Member Brooks-Powers.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and good
13 morning everyone. It's good to be here. Thank you
14 Chairs Ayala and Brannan and the Committee Staff for
15 facilitating this mornings hearing and also thank you
16 Commissioner Jenkins for your testimony. Just a few
17 questions but first, I'd like to acknowledge in the
18 short-time that you have been in your position, you
19 have been a true partner to my district and I just
20 want to publicly acknowledge that and thank you for
21 your partnership. And while we have a long road
22 ahead, especially as we look to have greater equity
23 across the city. I am pleased at what I've been able
24 to see thus far.

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2 So I just have a brief question for you. The
3 Council requested an additional \$41.6 million to
4 expand domestic violence shelter capacity but no
5 funding was added in the executive plan. Survivors
6 of domestic violence are often in extremely unsafe
7 situations and are most in need of this housing
8 resource and other critical sources of support. Can
9 the agency discuss how they plan to meet the needs of
10 these survivors given that the shelter system
11 currently has insufficient capacity.

12 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Majority Whip Brooks-
13 Powers. I have to say it's been my pleasure as well
14 working with you and your team who has been amazing,
15 respectful, reliable, and yes, we're going to
16 continue to build on our relationship and not walk
17 away or hide because we know that we're working on
18 behalf of your constituents, our fellow New Yorkers
19 to services that DSS provides.

20 In addressing our DV, we continue to evaluate and
21 making sure that you know we have proper services.
22 We have a vacancy rate within our system. It's
23 relatively low. We make sure that we have available
24 emergency beds, tier two beds to meet the demand for
25 our vulnerable population. We want to make sure that

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2 the survivors are receiving the services that they so
3 deserve. Just yesterday I was in Queens at a ribbon
4 cutting for a DV shelter. It was a wonderful one
5 because we opened one up where you know it's pets
6 friendly so survivors can go there you know with
7 their pets. We're going to continue to explore it
8 and see how we can improve our services and make sure
9 that it's available.

10 So again, when the need arises and if it arises,
11 we always ask as we do, is work with OMB to ensure
12 that we have proper funding for it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And does DSS work
14 also, like some of the community-based organization
15 like the safe horizons and is there a level of
16 coordination with the Mayor's Office to end gender-
17 based violence as well uhm around meeting the need
18 for domestic violence survivors?

19 GARY JENKINS: Absolutely Majority Whip, this
20 Administration, the Adams Administration don't
21 believe in working in silos. So, we are definitely
22 working with our sibling organization NGBV. We're
23 working with community-based organizations to
24 leverage the services that's out there for our
25 clients. So, again, not working in a silo but

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2 working in partnership with others to ensure that our
3 clients receive the services they deserve.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And my last
5 question around this is, with the coordination, do
6 you feel like there is a fiscal gap that exists in
7 terms of meeting that need for the domestic violence
8 shelter capacity and how are you offsetting that? Do
9 you get the data from them? Like what does that
10 coordination like look like to ensure that fiscally,
11 that the city is in a good place to address the
12 housing need?

13 GARY JENKINS: Myself and my agency work closely
14 with Commissioner Noel over MGBV. We are in close
15 communication. We're in close contact. We are doing
16 an assessment, an evaluation. When the need arises,
17 if we need to go jointly to OMB we will. But again,
18 just having that open communication and not working
19 those silos to make sure that we have available
20 funding and services. And when we identify new
21 services, uhm, we're going to you know have that
22 conversation and if needed, you know work with OMB as
23 well. It's a really, this is a really good
24 administration and I'm not just saying that because
25 I'm in it. I see the difference. I see the

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2 collaboration and we're going to continue on that
3 path.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so much.
5 No more questions Chairs.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member and
7 next, we'll turn to - I'm not seeing Council Member
8 Cabán. We will turn to Council Member Sanchez.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Good morning. Hi
11 Commissioner and hi everybody. Thank you so much for
12 participating in this hearing today. So, my first -
13 I first just want to you know sort of piggyback on
14 some of the comments and echo some of the comments
15 that Council Member Barron made about Fair Share,
16 about looking for opportunities. I am one that has
17 gone to that for DSS and DHS in my community and I'll
18 continue to do that because I believe that we need to
19 you know make as many of these beds available. You
20 know build as much housing available as we can but
21 there is an oversaturation in the West Bronx of
22 shelters and beds. And so, just want to want to you
23 know offer partnership on that in the same way that
24 Council Member Barron did.

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2 So, on a related note, uhm, I wanted to ask about
3 executive compensation at a shelter operators.

4 There's been a lot of new stories about you know
5 excessive, exorbitant salaries of executives that
6 they're making at the contracted DHS shelter
7 providers.

8 So, how does DHS justify these high salaries for
9 shelter operators? Are there any controls in the
10 contracting process that DHS includes?

11 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Council Member for that
12 excellent question and appreciate your offer to
13 continue to work with us as we look and have to build
14 shelters for our unsheltered population. So, really
15 appreciate your partnership and looking forward to
16 continuing our relationship and conversations around
17 that matter.

18 In regards to executive compensation. Working
19 with Ms. Lander from the Mayor's Office to ensure
20 that we have proper oversight but even before we go
21 outside, I want to be accountable as the Commissioner
22 for DSS to ensure that we are evaluating our
23 contracts. That we're doing our own internal
24 auditing to ensure that you know folks are adhering
25 to the contract. And I have to say again, the vast

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majority of our providers are doing the right thing. And when we identify you know through our audits that someone is going off the rail, we have our corrective action plan. We sit down with those providers because our providers, they really come into this business because they want to help. That is the approach that I'm looking at but also recognizing that there are some providers that we have to pay close attention to when we identify our concerns.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: I'm so sorry Commissioner, just because time is limited but are there specific guidelines on salary or executive compensation that the agency imposes?

GARY JENKINS: So, we're working on a universal guideline with Ms. Lander, so that way we can have an understanding across the board and the providers will understand it as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay, thank you. Thank you so much Commissioner. And then my second question is about the implementation of Local Law 53, which passed in last years, at the very end of last year and it went into effect in November of last year, which required for the city to work with non-profit organizations on the ground on tenant

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2 outreach and education and I specifically want to ask
3 about that because you know my community is just
4 rified with abuse right. We're at the heart of the
5 eviction crisis. Our folks are really struggling and
6 folks knowing their rights is really important and
7 being able to work with community-based organizations
8 that they know and they trust. You know the
9 organizers that they know and they trust is very
10 important. You know not diminishing what PEU does
11 and what other agencies do. What is the status of
12 the implementation of Local Law 53 as intended right?
13 To work with community-based organizations on the
14 ground.

15 And specifically, I understand that last year,
16 there were some funds earmarked to the tune of \$3
17 million for these organizations to receive support
18 from the city for this work. So, what is the status
19 of those funds and what are the administrations plans
20 to work with local community-based organizations on
21 tenant outreach?

22 GARY JENKINS: Thank you. You have some good
23 questions Council Member. I appreciate those and
24 they're very important. So, with Local Law 53, as
25 you may be aware, that was an unfunded mandate. It's

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2 not fully implemented as of yet. But you know in
3 this seat going into the six month, looking into how
4 we can uhm, uhm, make sure that it is fully
5 implemented. You know it's important. We want to
6 make sure that our clients, our tenants, know their
7 rights and working closely with PEU, tenant
8 protection unit, to ensure that clients are aware and
9 that they know their rights.

10 Working with Commissioner Palmer, right? When we
11 recognize if there's some discrimination. You know,
12 we want to make sure those referrals get over to that
13 agency and we make those referrals and proper follow
14 up is done. So, looking forward to having that
15 engaged conversation with you. If okay with you and
16 I will get back to you on where we actually stand.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much
18 Commissioner and I'll appreciate that. We need to
19 build capacity, especially in the lowest income
20 communities and working with those on the ground
21 organizations is an excellent way but thank you so
22 much Commissioner. Thank you Chairs.

23 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Council Member.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
25 Sanchez. Next, we'll turn to Council Member Brewer.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Thank you very much and thank you for the follow up on that question I asked you the other day. I appreciate that very much.

GARY JENKINS: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: This is on the issue of homeless prevention. According to the material we have, there's less money from '22 to '23 for that topic. My question is, is we obviously want people to have the best outcome possible, which might be to stay where they are or to get something similar. So, folks coming from the upstate prisons. Half of whom end up in the system. [AUDIO BREAKING UP 1:44:05]. I want your opinion on this. Obviously, this would require money, would be to have them go to Fortune or Exodus or whatever the appropriate community is that works with this population. Is that something that you're considering? Is there any money allocated to that? It would cost more but then you would have I think a better outcome for the individuals and they wouldn't end up in the shelter system. What are you doing to -

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2 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Council Member. I think
3 I heard you clearly. I know you was breaking up some
4 but I think the jest of your question is how are we
5 working with other organizations such as Fortune and
6 Exodus for folks not to go into shelter and to go
7 into one of these programs.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, it's almost, you
9 know it's half of the 9,000. So, it's like 4,500 or
10 more going to the shelter every single year, yeah.

11 GARY JENKINS: Excellent idea and question. I
12 did have a meeting with the State Corrections
13 Commissioner because we wanted to discuss the exit
14 plan. What does that look like? And how we can be
15 helpful. So, I'm in conversation with the state docs
16 to determine how can we work collaboratively so folks
17 who are released and did their time, right but don't
18 have a place to go when they come back to New York
19 City, if this is their place of residence and not
20 have to go into our shelter system. Those
21 conversations are ongoing. We'd love to continue
22 this discussion with you as well because it is a good
23 idea but we are meeting with the state and we do have
24 - we discussed a pilot where individuals can not go
25 into the shelter system but go into a program that's

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2 managed by the state for a certain period of time as
3 they work and we work with them on a more stable
4 housing plan.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean I think it's a
6 great idea, particularly in groups life works and are
7 involved because they understand the peer to peer
8 community and can make sure that people are housed
9 and have the appropriate services. Same thing with
10 people coming from the military. How many - I know
11 when Lori Sutton was head of that office, we actually
12 met with the different militaries, trying to see okay,
13 who is coming to New York because they do end up in
14 your shelter system. So, do you have any numbers?
15 And are you also suggesting meeting with the military
16 to do the same kind of thing, a discharge perhaps not
17 to your shelter system? Is there any discussion
18 along those lines?

19 GARY JENKINS: So, absolutely. As I said
20 earlier, we don't work in silos in this
21 administration. So, Commissioner Hinden, I have a
22 very good, close relationship with him. We're in
23 constant communication to determine what's best for
24 our vets, right? We don't want our vets going into
25 shelter. We want to work on getting them into some

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2 type of permanent housing or supportive housing if
3 that's what they're eligible for. So, we're
4 constantly in constant contact, to determine, how do
5 we address this population in a dignified fashion?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I think it's good. I
7 hope he is doing that, so I can ask him and you know
8 it's good to talk to him, what's actually happening.
9 And then the other question I have is, overtime, this
10 is 40-year discussion. When you have a temporary
11 bed, you have some city, some state and some federal
12 money. When you have a permanent bed, it's usually
13 your money, it's city money. Do we know the amount
14 of city money that goes into temporary versus state
15 and city and state and federal? And is there any
16 discussion about pulling it? I know you lose the
17 match and just using it for permanent housing.

18 GARY JENKINS: Thank you for that question. You
19 know that's a complex question Council Member Brewer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I've been asking it for
21 40 years. Go ahead.

22 GARY JENKINS: For 40 years, I've been in this
23 position for four months.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know but -
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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 GARY JENKINS: I understand Council Member. Let
3 me see what we can pull. I'll have a discussion with
4 the Chief Financial Officer to see if that's
5 something that's available to us.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And then the other
7 issue, there's less money for homeless prevention.
8 Why is that from the previous year to now? Why is
9 there less money for homeless prevention?

10 GARY JENKINS: So, as we know the key to
11 preventing homelessness is prevention. So, we are
12 looking at ways and we are working with our wonderful
13 providers with homebase. I can say that I'm looking
14 to see how we can expand homebase but again, working
15 with our Chief Housing Officer as we develop a plan
16 you know and come up with these ideas and not work in
17 silos and meeting with various providers and meeting
18 with you know people with real lived experience. We
19 want to make sure we come up with a comprehensive
20 plan. So, where we're looking at prevention and how
21 we could really pay attention to that because
22 prevention is the key to - prevention is the key from
23 homelessness.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Well, one other question.

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Do you pay sal- in other words, when people can't pay

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their rent. I know about one shots. I'm really good

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at one shots.

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GARY JENKINS: Yes, you are.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They don't work for

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everybody. So, uhm, I can get - I've gotten \$29,000.

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I know how to get one shots but the issue is, are we

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actually paying rent to people out of some of your

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budget for those to avoid [AUDIO BREAKING UP

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1:49:05]. What are we doing to keep people in their

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home is the issue.

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GARY JENKINS: So, Council Member, you broke up

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again but yes, we are working -

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh, okay go ahead.

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GARY JENKINS: It's the Wi-Fi, it's okay. We are

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working with our homebase providers to ensure, of

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course we want to prevent any type of evictions or

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going into a homeless shelter. We are - the

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providers actually are aware as you are, refer those

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individuals to HRA to apply for a one-shot deal.

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When that occurs, we are also encouraging individuals

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to apply for ERAP. Because we know ERAP has those

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built in protections as well but we're not waiting

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2 for a decision as of right now to pay any rental
3 arrears for individuals who are eligible for a one
4 shot. We are paying those one shots and that is a
5 prevention tool that we have in our tool box that we
6 continue to implement.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, I guess from the
8 staff, I'd love to know where is it that there's a
9 gap? [INAUDIBLE 1:50:06]. My rent isn't paid. I'm
10 not eligible for one shot because not everybody is.
11 What's going on with ERAP? Nobody get evicted, it's
12 just a rent issue. Thank you very much. I want to
13 know those numbers as to where that delta is. Thank
14 you.

15 GARY JENKINS: You're welcome Council Member.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
17 Brewer. I will now turn it back to Chairs Ayala and
18 Brannan.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm back. Uhm, okay, I have
20 a few more questions but regarding the homebased
21 program, do we know how many people are applying for
22 one shot deals through homebase and how many have
23 been declined?

24 GARY JENKINS: Deputy Chair - Deputy Speaker, we
25 don't have that information today but we will get

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back to you. So, we're taking notes and we will make that information and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, I think you know most of - one of the biggest complaints that I get from you know people that are going to the homebased program I guess is that if the arrears are you know too significant then, you know they pretty much are putting it on - you know the responsibility on the renter to kind of go out and try to get you know funding from you know a host of other you know resources like Catholic Charities or other you know groups that maybe give \$500 here, \$1,000 there, which you know it's time consuming and it's just pretty annoying right.

So, I think it's cheaper to just pay it, pay the arrears than having to pay for a person in shelter, which is pretty costly but I look forward to those numbers.

GARY JENKINS: May I response Deputy Speaker?

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

GARY JENKINS: Yeah, you know, we want to make sure that we're being responsible with city dollars. We want to make sure that we are the last resort right? Because we know that you know city dollars

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2 and state dollars are precious funds. So, if there
3 are other means to assist with paying rental arrears,
4 we want to make sure that individuals you know
5 explore those options but again, the end result is as
6 a city agency, we do not want anyone to be evicted
7 from their home and potentially become homeless.

8 So, when they come to us, we want to make sure
9 that all other avenues were explored but in the end,
10 once that is verified and they're eligible, we're
11 going to make those payments. Because you're
12 absolutely correct, we want to make sure that folks
13 stay within their homes.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, how do you make the
15 decision between who gets, you know who gets, who
16 qualifies for a one shot deal and who gets then to
17 ERAP?

18 GARY JENKINS: Well, we're sending everyone to
19 ERAP, right. You come in, we're like, you go to
20 ERAP. Uhm, and then we are making our, you know we
21 have state rules and federal rules that really govern
22 us on how we determine eligibility. So, that's in
23 place and it's been in place for decades. That
24 hasn't changed but we want to make sure that folks
25 who are eligible receive those benefits.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, but I mean if I owed
3 \$10,000 in rent, you know are you sending me to ERAP?
4 I mean, it's not, you know it's not a huge number or
5 is that something that HRA is able to help with? I
6 mean listen, there's a lot of benefits to ERAP right
7 because you don't have to pay back. I mean there's a
8 lot. There's a lot of benefit, I get that but we
9 also don't have you know all of the resources you
10 know available. There's no infinite number right, to
11 ensure that everybody declined is going to get you
12 know some sort of a grant.

13 So, you know it always concerns me that we're
14 losing people in the transition and we're asking them
15 to sign up for ERAP and then you know, for whatever
16 reason they get declined. Are they coming back?
17 Like, it becomes really kind of difficult to you know
18 keep tabs on folks. So, that's scarce a little bit.

19 GARY JENKINS: If you don't mind Deputy Speaker,
20 I want to have Administrator Fitzpatrick chime in.

21 LISA FITZPATRICK: Thank you so much Commissioner
22 and thank you Chair Ayala. When people apply for one
23 shot deals, the agencies practice is currently to
24 encourage them to apply for ERAP but we continue to
25 process the application for a one shot deal. When

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2 ERAP first opened, that had to be the primary
3 resource. ERAP was considered a resource and we
4 weren't able to continue processing the application
5 until there was a decision on the ERAP case. But
6 now, since the state ERAP program is limited - [LOST
7 AUDIO].

8 GARY JENKINS: Lisa, Lisa, we lost you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You got muted Lisa.

10 LISA FITZPATRICK: Can you hear me now?

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes.

12 GARY JENKINS: Yes, we can.

13 LISA FITZPATRICK: Were you able to hear me
14 before, I'm sorry. I don't know why I went back on
15 mute.

16 Yeah, okay, so, the states ERAP portal, we opened
17 in January on January 11th, but many of these clients
18 would not be eligible for assistance. So, when they
19 apply for HRA one shot deals, we are encouraging them
20 to go to the ERAP only to get the eviction prevention
21 that ERAP offers but we continue to process the
22 application for one shot deals. Some of those
23 individuals that come to us are also eligible for
24 recurring cash assistance. If they're eligible for
25 recurring cash assistance, if they have a child under

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2 the age of 18, they may be eligible for ongoing
3 rental assistance through the Family Eviction
4 Prevention Program, the States FHEPS program or they
5 might be eligible for benefits through city – can you
6 hear me? I'm sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Hmm, uhm hmm.

8 LISA FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I'm not sure. My camera
9 is not on. They are telling me there's something
10 wrong with my camera.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: It's fine, it's on.

12 LISA FITZPATRICK: Okay, but they are eligible
13 for ongoing rental assistance through either the City
14 FHEPS program or FHEPS Program and we're also trying
15 to help people through the homebased program apply
16 for the emergency housing vouchers. So, through
17 those three strategies, people maybe eligible for
18 ongoing rental assistance. If we only focus on that
19 one time payment, the month after we make that
20 payment, if the household does not have a future
21 ability to pay, then they start accumulating arrears
22 again. And that doesn't serve anybody. So, we want
23 to make sure, not that they just get that one time
24 payment but then they also get, they also have a
25 future ability to pay so this way, the landlord

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2 doesn't file an eviction against them two or three
3 months after they get that one time payment.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Got you. I know that Council
5 Member Cabán is back. I just have to ask a question,
6 two more questions regarding the capital project.

7 So, for me, you know I mean we struggle right with
8 the congregate setting and the singles and I wonder
9 if any thought has been given to conversion of
10 existing uh, dorm setting transition to singles and
11 if any capital funding has been allocated for
12 something like that?

13 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Deputy Speaker. As we
14 evaluate and look at our footprint we have across the
15 city, those conversations are in consideration but
16 we're really mainly focused on as I said earlier, our
17 purpose built shelters to make sure we get it right
18 going forward. You know, I'm going to be honest,
19 it's going to be a challenge going back and then
20 having as you - if we do any conversions, finding
21 locations to place those individuals temporarily
22 while that construction is occurring. But the goal
23 here is really looking forward at our purpose built
24 shelters in our low barrier locations such as safe
25 havens and stabilization beds.

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CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I mean, I get it but I just think that we have so much — you know we have vacancies at the existing sites and it's just like, you know we're creating more and not really utilizing what we have, right in the best way that you know possible. And this is like way beyond you know us but I think that some thought should be given to conversions of congregate settings into singles because we know that that works you know better.

GARY JENKINS: Thank you.

JOSLYN CARTER: Commissioner, can I just one thing Deputy Speaker Ayala, it is also important to make sure we have dormitory style because I think there are situations that we do need uhm, that setting for those individuals who need that because not every individual functions well in single rooms, because depending on what their status is and what's happening with them in terms of the individual — what's happening with them individually. So, we have to really make sure that we have settings to meet every persons need. So, we have to be careful about saying we need to have a single setting for every person.

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CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Well, I'm sure that there are creative ways of creating, you know getting the same outcome and you know being able to provide that added level of you know oversight without having to make people feel you know uncomfortable. I mean, I couldn't imagine having to live in a dorm style. And I was in shelter and I shared a room at the Catherine Shelter site with two other families and we were divided by you know a very small you know divider. I mean, it was horrible. It was horrible. So, I can't even imagine and this was a family shelter.

I can't even imagine what it's like you know to live in that type of environment. It's bad enough to be homeless but to have to feel like you know, you've hit rock bottom. Uhm, it must be horrible. So, you know just something to consider. I think as you know as we move forward, it's 2022 and we have to kind of rethink, you know think outside of the box and reimagine uhm, you know the level of services that we're offering you know in a way that's more efficient and you know that allows for some cost savings. Because we're spending a lot of money as a city you know uh, opening you know new sites and accompanying for new beds. And you know I think that

1
2 a lot of that could be alleviated by really
3 rethinking uhm, the spaces that we already have
4 access to.

5 And then, my final question before I turn over -

6 GARY JENKINS: Deputy Speaker, if I may Deputy
7 Speaker?

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah.

9 GARY JENKINS: I look forward with collaborating
10 with you on that thought process.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, I think you know I
12 would appreciate that. The final question is really
13 regarding the cost of the street sweeps, our
14 encampments. We've been having some difficulty
15 trying to ascertain like who you know who has
16 complete oversight you know under which agency. Like
17 you know, are we budgeting you know for these
18 services to be rendered. You know so, can you
19 provide details on the cost of the recent sweeps and
20 was any funding added in the Executive Plan?

21 GARY JENKINS: So, Deputy Speaker, I can't
22 provide the exact funding but it is as you are aware,
23 it's a multiagency collaboration with our sanitation
24 department, DHS, outreach staff, NYPD and we are
25 working in collaboration right. The whole goal with

1
2 the encampment cleanups is really to build that trust
3 and bring individuals inside so we can provide the
4 services to them because there's no dignity and I
5 think you're in agreement with me, with someone
6 living in a cardboard box or in their own waste. So,
7 we are looking at how can we continue to meet that
8 person where they are and build that trust and bring
9 them inside so they can receive the services. Not
10 that they want but they deserve.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, no, no, no, listen I
12 agree. I don't want anyone sleeping in a box but I
13 want to know how much city funding we're utilizing to
14 do that work and you know exactly which agency is
15 getting you know has access to those dollars.
16 Because those are public dollars and we should you
17 know have a clear accounting of exactly how much
18 money is going into these sweeps and you know, we've
19 just been having a difficult time with you know the
20 different agencies in terms of what percentage of
21 those funds if any you know is actually going towards
22 that work.

23 GARY JENKINS: If I may Deputy Speaker? If I
24 may, I just want to challenge you a little on the
25 terminology and I know you know folks use it as

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2 sweeps but I don't consider it as a sweep. I
3 consider it as a clean up effort. I consider it as a
4 cleanup effort. I consider it really building that
5 trust and really getting individuals to come inside.
6 So, I don't look at it as a sweep, I really do look
7 at it as an attempt to really meet that person where
8 they are. Get them to accept our services and make
9 sure that we're cleaning up those neighborhoods where
10 there are unsafe environments. Because we do as a
11 city receive phone calls from a lot of individuals
12 through 311 stating that you know, can you please
13 address this unsafe environment.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: No listen, I appreciate it
15 and you know you're a great guy. I think very highly
16 of you and I know that you have the best of
17 intentions but you know I think that to you know to
18 deny that. That is you know the sentiment that these
19 are sweeps to some people right, is an accurate
20 description of you know, of what's happening. You
21 know, so I get it. I get what you're saying and I
22 really appreciate you and all of the effort that you
23 put into this. I've seen you out there you know on
24 weekends, at night. Uhm, you know and I really
25 appreciate that because I think that you know in

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2 order to lead effectively, you need to kind of be
3 there and live it and see it for yourself so that
4 you're better able - you know we're not only
5 connected to what's happening on the ground but
6 better able to assess you know where we could be
7 doing better.

8 GARY JENKINS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So, thank you for that and I
10 want to acknowledge that Council Member Cabán, she
11 had a question and I would like to recognize her.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. I really
13 appreciate that Chair Ayala and actually, it's kind
14 of perfect because I want to build on what you talked
15 about but I do have a reaction to the previous answer
16 before I go into my question about it. Is that you
17 know, quite frankly and with all due respect, it
18 doesn't matter to me what you would like to call the
19 sweeps. If you don't like the word sweep, for me, it
20 matters to how the people who are being directly
21 impacted are experiencing it and they are
22 experiencing it as violence. They are experiencing
23 it as very negative effects. We have begun to use
24 the word sweep because that is what they feel like.
25 They have articulated that they feel swept of the

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2 spaces, further into the shadows and you know I think
3 that softer language and euphemisms can actually be a
4 barrier and harmful to our efforts to create
5 solutions, dignified solutions for people and just to
6 make sure that we are centering peoples experiences.
7 That this not about cleaning up our streets but it's
8 about caring for our people, right.

9 It's not about making other people more
10 comfortable because they are uncomfortable with
11 seeing folks who are in crisis or struggling but
12 rather a center around the support for those people.
13 So, I will get off my soap box now but Commissioner,
14 you did talk a little bit about how the purpose of
15 these sweeps uhm and what you're trying to do is
16 build trust and so, my first question is, what
17 research or studies has DHS or DSS conducted to find
18 out how homeless folks experience the sweeps? Right
19 because frontline outreach providers have raised
20 significant red flags about the role of sweeps
21 including JCC staff, including stating that they wish
22 that they weren't doing them. And so, what specific
23 clinical or other evidence do you have that people
24 experiencing sweeps do not harm the relationships
25 with outreach providers?

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GARY JENKINS: Thank you for that important question Council Member and again, you know as we look at our cleanup efforts and I'll say that the public is calling. I say the vast majority of New Yorkers are really calling because they care about these unsheltered New Yorkers. It's not about oh, let's get this site out of my neighborhood but I really - I really believe they really care about the individual or individuals that's there.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Excuse me Commissioner, I'm really sorry but I know I have limited time and so I just really want the answer to the specific question of, you know in terms of building trust right and the relationships to providers. What specific clinical or other evidence do you have that people that are experiencing these sweeps right now, that the way that this is being done does not harm their relationship with outreach providers?

GARY JENKINS: So, we're working with our DOHMH, our clinicians to really drill down. We're speaking with people with real lived life experiences. We're calling it in. We're having that conversation on how we can do things better and how can we learn from the experiences of real life of people who are actually

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2 homeless or lived in encampment, so that we can
3 develop those policies going forward. Also, talking
4 to other states and other leaders in this field,
5 we're learning from them as well. I'm headed to
6 Seattle next month to really learn, how are they
7 addressing their homeless population and then really
8 to answer your question, is looking at what are the
9 scientific evidence that's out there to help guide
10 us. You know I've been in this role since January,
11 so really starting to really dig in to better
12 understand how can we serve this population.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you and I would love
14 for us all at the Council to be sort of kept up to
15 date on what you continue to learn. You know, is DSS
16 finding it difficult to get staffing for the end of
17 line initiative or the sweeps? And if so, like why
18 do you think that that is?

19 GARY JENKINS: We're in active hiring for staff
20 and as I said earlier, you know across the job
21 sector, folks are, it is a challenge, getting people
22 to want to come into the offices but really this is
23 really unique, hard, difficult, challenging work.
24 So, we are looking to determine who is out there. I
25 asked the Council Members, Council Member Cabán as

1
2 well, if you know of any individuals that really is
3 up to do this type of work, please send them our way
4 because we have positions and we want dedicated staff
5 that can do this work with us.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you and I know I'm
7 running out of time, so I just also want to kind of
8 like ask a little bit more clarifying questions. I
9 mean, essentially some of what Chair Ayala asked but
10 would love some specificity.

11 So, I know that like it's an interagency effort,
12 like how are you all communicating plans to other
13 agencies and who's the actual backstop for the
14 process?

15 GARY JENKINS: So, again, we're working with
16 multiple agencies and from DSS perspective, when we
17 go out and we go out before the cleanups occur.
18 We're out in the encampments. We're speaking with
19 individuals and we're really conveying that there's a
20 better way and I hope you agree Council Member, there
21 is no dignity living in a cardboard box.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 GARY JENKINS: And we understand that there's
24 each individual have unique challenges and unique
25 issues that we want to address and we go down there

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2 every day, every night building that trust to
3 hopefully, eventually that person will say yes, come
4 in and then we're working with our sibling agencies
5 to ensure that we're working as a joint effort, not
6 in a silo.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Well, thank you and I just
8 will end by saying that like I do agree that there's
9 not dignity in that and you know, I think that
10 there's dignity in a housing first approach right.
11 Then there's significant evidence backing up that
12 that approach works and specifically it's you know
13 dignity in permanent housing directly from the street
14 without requiring access to stabilization or
15 congregate settings or things like that and that
16 should be our city's aim. Thanks.

17 GARY JENKINS: Thank you Council Member.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I have no further questions.
19 Council Member Brannan.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, do you have any
21 closing remarks or do you want me to close it out?

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You can close it out.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Commissioner, thank
24 you. I think you know; I want you to see the Council
25 as partners here in this work. Obviously we're

1
2 focused on how these tax dollars are spent. Just
3 want to make sure they're spent efficiently, make
4 sure that they're - and that there's quantifiable
5 metrics that we can take back to our constituents to
6 say this is where the money is going and here are
7 some success stories of how we're actually getting
8 things done and getting people to better outcomes.
9 That's ultimately what this is all about.

10 So, we appreciate your time and I think we're
11 going to head now into our next agency hearing. So,
12 thank you all so much.

13 GARY JENKINS: Thank you very much. Thank you
14 very much Chairs. I appreciate it and I will close
15 by saying as well, looking forward to building on our
16 collaboration and our partnership. It means a lot
17 because we know that we are here for New Yorkers and
18 we want to make sure that we are being responsible
19 with city funds and state funds and federal funds.
20 But at the top of our list, this administration is
21 how do we provide those services to people who
22 deserve them? So, thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you Commissioner.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

25 GARY JENKINS: Okay.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay Chairs. We'll stand in
3 recess until 12:00 noon, so if anybody needs to take
4 a break, take it now.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yes sir.

6 [RECESS 2:11:43-2:22:23]

7 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Good afternoon to the members
8 of the Administration. If you'd like to use this
9 time to test your audio, you may.

10 JESS DANNHAUSER: Good morning Sergeant.

11 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Good morning Commissioner,
12 picking you up loud and clear, thank you.

13 WINETTE SAUNDERS: Good morning Sergeant.

14 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Good morning First Deputy
15 Commissioner. Thank you, sounding loud and clear.

16 MICHAEL MOISEYEV: Good morning Sergeant.

17 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Alright, picking you up loud
18 and clear as well. Thank you sir.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, Deputy Commissioner for
20 Finance, Michael, how do you pronounce your last
21 name?

22 MICHAEL MOISEYEV: Moiseyev.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Okay, Deputy Commissioner
25 Gendell, would you like to test your audio?

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THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good morning, this is
3 Stephanie.

4 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Good morning. Picking you up
5 loud and clear, thank you so much.

6 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chairs Brannan and Ayala?

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, are you ready to go?

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm ready.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Ready.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, alright, we can go
13 ahead and get started. We're already recording so
14 Chair Brannan, we'll start with your opening then
15 Chair Ayala, then I can swear in the Admin.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Cool. Thank you Counsel.
17 Good afternoon everyone and well, yeah, it is
18 afternoon. It's 12 noon on the dime. Welcome to the
19 second portion of the 8th day of Executive Budget
20 hearings. My name is still Justin Brannan and I
21 think I am still the Chair of the Finance Committee.
22 I'm joined again by colleague Deputy Speaker Diana
23 Ayala who is Chair of the Committee on General
24 Welfare.

25

1
2 I'm pleased to welcome Jess Dannhauser,
3 Commissioner of ACS. Thank you Commissioner for you
4 and your team for joining us today as we delve deeper
5 into the Executive Budget for ACS. For those of you
6 watching at home, ACS stands for the Administration
7 of Children Services.

8 ACS's projected FY'23 budget of \$2.7 billion
9 represents \$2.7 percent of the city's proposed FY23
10 budget. ACS Fiscal '23 budget increased by \$12.3
11 million from the Preliminary Plan. The increase is
12 the result of several actions taken. Most
13 significant of which are a new need recognizing state
14 revenues for Fair Futures and baselining state
15 revenues for the Indirect Cost Rate Initiative of
16 \$6.5 million.

17 There are no worthy swaps of \$35 million in state
18 funding for city funds in FY22 and \$60 million in
19 federal funding for city funds in FY23, related to
20 the end of the Title IV-E Foster Care Waiver. These
21 swaps offset each other and have no impact on ACS's
22 budget.

23 My questions today as Chair will focus on child
24 care funding, the state and federal budget risk and
25 secure detention facility renovations. I want to

1
2 thank Dan Kroop for his hard work on today's budget
3 hearing and everyone behind the scenes who makes
4 these hearings possible. I'm now going to turn to my
5 Co-Chair Deputy Speaker Ayala for her opening
6 remarks.

7 CHAIRPERSON ALAYA: I'm your favorite Council
8 Member.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And my favorite, sorry,
10 I'll add that.

11 CHAIRPERSON ALAYA: I want to the record to show.
12 Good afternoon. Good afternoon Commissioner. I'm
13 Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee on
14 General Welfare. We will now hold the Committee's
15 joint hearing on the Fiscal 2023 Executive Budget for
16 the Administration of Children Services or ACS.
17 Thank you to Finance Chair Brannan for his leadership
18 and partnership throughout this budget process and
19 during these hearings.

20 A reminder to those watching to please take note
21 that members of the public are invited to testify
22 next Wednesday May 25th. Though you may visit the
23 council.nyc.gov website to learn more.

24 Welcome to Commissioner Dannhauser, our work
25 continues to protect and support New York City's

1
2 Children and Families. ACS is the city's leading
3 agency on child welfare and the work it does lies at
4 the intersection of poverty, racism, mental health,
5 housing instability and the availability of community
6 level resources. We must be laser focused on
7 building the infrastructure of care, compassion and
8 treatment that is needed to help families thrive.

9 ACS's Fiscal 2023 Executive Budget is \$2.74
10 billion. An increase of \$12.3 million, or .05
11 percent from the Preliminary Budget. The increase is
12 the result of two main actions. A new need of \$5.3
13 million baseline state revenue for Fair Futures and
14 \$6.5 million in state revenues added to the indirect
15 cost rate initiative.

16 Following a program to eliminate the gap in the
17 Preliminary Plan, that removed 227 positions to the
18 Executive Plan makes no further savings in Fiscal
19 Year 2023 or the outer years. There are 7,073 full
20 time positions in the ACS's budget in both the
21 current fiscal year and fiscal year 2023. The City
22 Council has long partnered with the Administration to
23 make critical progress. This includes the Council's
24 signature Fair Futures Initiative, which is set to
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2 uplift 4,000 young people across all five boroughs
3 next year.

4 The additional funding for Fair Futures brings
5 the baseline total to \$30.7 million, of which \$20
6 million in city funds. This funding will enable ACS
7 to engage foster youth and youth involved in the
8 juvenile justice system up to age 26. ACS is working
9 to engage a line who aged out of Fair Futures at the
10 current limit of 21-years-old but who cannot receive
11 support next year.

12 I look forward to hearing the Administrations
13 strategy for expanding Fair Futures and providing
14 real support for at risk youth in the nation leading
15 program. These are precisely the type of upstream
16 preventive investments in youth that the Council has
17 long advocated for. Whether in mental health, job
18 programs or wrap around services. I welcome the
19 Administrations partnerships and make these effective
20 via overdue investments.

21 Beyond Fair Futures however, other preventive
22 investments the Council called for in its preliminary
23 budget response remain outstanding. This includes \$5
24 million for empowering skill buildings programming in
25 the juvenile justice facilities and a promise to make

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2 supportive housing easily accessible for all former
3 foster youth who qualify.

4 The Executive Budget plan did not fund these
5 programs. The Executive Budget includes note worthy
6 slots of \$35 million in state funding for city funds
7 in Fiscal Year '22 due to lower than anticipated
8 revenues and \$60 million in federal funding for city
9 funds in Fiscal Year 2023 related to the end of the
10 Title V-E Foster Care Waiver.

11 We are also awaiting information on how \$4
12 billion of over four years in state funding for child
13 care will be rolled out in the city. I hope to hear
14 more about how the city will maximize available
15 dollars and fully invest in children services and
16 child care. Even as federal and state funding
17 shifts.

18 Finally, ACS's Capital Commitment Plan for Fiscal
19 Year 2022-2026 totals \$527.3 million. \$16 million
20 more than the Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan.
21 60 percent of funding supports the reconstruction
22 projects at two secure detention facilities and I
23 look forward to hearing about when these educational
24 recreational and programming spaces will be available
25 to detained youth. I kindly request the Commissioner

1
2 please keep his testimony to ten minutes, so that we
3 can hear Council Member questions.

4 In addition to the topics above, we hope to
5 discuss other issues, such as alternatives to
6 detention, foster care market rates and ACS's
7 alternative response program called Cares. I would
8 like to thank the Committee Staff who helped to
9 prepare this hearing, Daniel Kroop, Chima Obichere,
10 Dohini Sompura, Aminta Kilawan, Cristi Dwyer and my
11 Deputy Chief of Staff Michelle Cruz.

12 I want to pass it back to Finance Counsel to call
13 uh, counsel to continue our hearing. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs Brannan and
15 Ayala. Good afternoon and welcome to the second
16 portion of the Executive Budget hearing for May 20th.
17 The Administration for Children Services.

18 My name is Malcom Butehorn and I am the Counsel
19 to the Finance Committee. I'd first like to
20 acknowledge Council Members present for the record.
21 Council Members Brannan, Ayala, Brewer, Cabán,
22 Hudson, Lee, Louis, Ossé, Sanchez, Velázquez, and
23 Ung.

24 Unlike in the past, Council Members and members
25 of the mayoral administration will have the ability

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2 to mute and unmute themselves. We just ask that when
3 not speaking to eliminate background noise to please
4 mute yourself.

5 I will remind Council Members who have questions,
6 please use the raise hand function in Zoom. You will
7 be called on in the order with which you raised your
8 hand. We will be limiting Council Member questions
9 to five minutes.

10 The following members of the Administration are
11 here to testify and/or answer questions, Jess
12 Dannhauser Commissioner, Winette Saunders, First
13 Deputy Commissioner, Michael Moiseyev, Deputy
14 Commissioner for Finance and Stephanie Gendell,
15 Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs.

16 I will first read the oath and after I will call
17 on each member from the administration individually
18 to respond. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
19 whole truth and nothing but the truth before these
20 Committee's and to respond honestly to Council Member
21 questions. Commissioner Dannhauser?

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: First DC Saunders?

24 WINETTE SAUNDERS: I do.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DC Moiseyev?

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MICHAEL MOISEYEV: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And DC Gendell?

STEPHANIE GENDELL: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Commissioner Dannhauser, you may begin when ready.

JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair Ayala, Chair Brannan, and members of the General Welfare and Finance Committees. I am Jess Dannhauser, the Commissioner of ACS. With me today are Winette Saunders, our First Deputy Commissioner; Michael Moiseyev, Deputy Commissioner for Finance; and Stephanie Gendell, our Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs.

As part of Mayor Adams's vision, ACS is committed to helping build a New York City that is more safe, just and equitable for children, youth and families. I have spent the past few months as Commissioner listening to parents, youth, providers, ACS staff, advocates and community members. And as we move forward, ACS will rely on the ideas, wisdom and assets of New York City's communities and families.

At ACS, we are focused on keeping children safe by ensuring their families have the resources they need to thrive. We know that when communities are

1
2 strong, families are strong. As part of this, I am
3 pleased to share the advocacy by the city has helped
4 lead to a substantial increase in child care funding.
5 The city anticipates receiving approximately \$4
6 billion over the next four years.

7 ACS and our city partners have successfully
8 advocated for important legislative changes at the
9 state level, including the increase in the income
10 eligibility for low income child care from 200
11 percent to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level
12 starting on August 1st and an increase in the market
13 rate for providers. We are also very pleased that
14 earlier this week, our proposal to delink the hours
15 of child care from the hours a parent works passed
16 both houses of the legislature and we are eager for
17 the Governor to sign the bill.

18 ACS is expanding access to affordable child care
19 for families across the city. First, we are in the
20 process of reaching out to the parents and caregivers
21 of all the children who were on the voucher wait list
22 to invite them to apply for child care. If they
23 apply and are found eligible, they will be provided
24 with a child care voucher. To date, ACS has sent
25 letters to the families of 22,000 children, and we

1
2 anticipate that by September we will have contacted
3 the remaining 15,000. We're also lowering the fee
4 that families pay for care to the lowest level
5 permissible by federal law.

6 ACS is also in the process of expanding our
7 Family Enrichment Centers from three to 30 over the
8 next three years. Since our last budget hearing in
9 March, ACS announced the anticipated awards for the
10 next nine in the expansion, bringing us to 12. We
11 are very pleased that the nine providers selected all
12 have deep ties in their respective communities, and
13 some are small local organizations that have not
14 contracted with ACS previously.

15 We've created a short video and we look forward
16 to sharing that with you today. We know that
17 parenting can be difficult, especially with the
18 economic and social challenges created by the
19 pandemic. ACS contracts with over 135 prevention
20 services programs to provide free, voluntary services
21 that are available in every community, regardless of
22 immigration status. Each year, more than 35,000
23 children and their families receive prevention
24 services. And we know these services lead to good
25 outcomes and that parents feel they're beneficial.

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2 As part of the 2021 Family Experience Survey, we
3 surveyed thousands of parents with participation in
4 prevention services and they told us that they were
5 overwhelmingly satisfied: 93 percent said they were
6 happy with the services and almost 90 percent said
7 they would recommend the services to their friends.

8 We have been taking a close look at our child
9 protection practices to see how we can continue to
10 build on our work to keep children safe, while
11 reducing trauma and better supporting families. We
12 are continuing to expand both the number of families
13 that are served via the CARES track and the number of
14 CARES units that handle those cases. Over the past
15 year, we have increased the percentage of cases that
16 go on the CARES track by 71 percent.

17 By the end of 2022, we anticipate increasing from
18 32 to 48 CARES units, and to 64 units by the end of
19 2023. We're also looking at ways to reduce the
20 stress investigations can cause for families. We
21 will soon be initiating a pilot, where CPS will share
22 information and resources to parents, including the
23 contact information for legal providers, at the first
24 visit. In addition, we are changing our process, so
25 that our Emergency Children's Services unit, which

1
2 operates on evenings and weekends, will no longer be
3 initiating investigations without immediate safety
4 allegations at night, when children are most likely
5 obviously to be sleeping and the stress of an
6 investigation can be most acute.

7 Through successful prevention programs and
8 initiatives to reduce length of stay in foster care,
9 the number of children in care is at an historic low
10 of 7,135 children. Forty-three percent of these
11 children are placed with kin.

12 Starting this July, ACS will be implementing a
13 range of new resources and strategies to further
14 improve outcomes for children and families in the
15 foster care system. In March, the mayor and ACS
16 announced the launch of VCRED, a new vocational and
17 apprenticeship program for youth ages 16-24 who are
18 in foster care, who were in foster care, or are in
19 the juvenile justice system. The grant-funded
20 program enables 45 youth annually to participate in
21 professional certification courses and paid
22 internships in five career pathways. First launched
23 in 2019, Fair Futures currently provides thousands of
24 youth ages 11-21 in foster care with coaches, tutors
25 and housing and educational specialists. The

1
2 proposed budget for FY23 will provide ACS with \$30.7
3 million of baselined funding for Fair Futures,
4 enabling us to expand the program to youth ages 21-26
5 and first in the country to do this and to youth in
6 our juvenile justice programs.

7 I will personally thank Mayor Adams for his
8 commitment to Fair Futures and to the City Council
9 for your commitment and support. In addition, the
10 success of the advocacy for Fair Futures could not
11 have happened without the Fair Futures Coalition and
12 most importantly, without the Fair Futures Youth
13 Advocacy Board. In just a few weeks, it will be
14 summer, and ACS very much looks forward to youth
15 involvement in both the city's expanded SYEP program
16 and Freedom School. If you, like me have never been
17 to a Freedom School Harambee, I urge you to be there
18 this year; we read culturally-appropriate books and
19 poetry, and engage with youth, including through
20 dance. ACS is also pleased that we have identified
21 more than 1,000 young people across our continuum for
22 SYEP this summer.

23 At the end of April, the Nunez monitors released
24 their most recent report on detention. In 2020, ACS
25 entered into a Voluntary Agreement with the Nunez

1
2 monitors. In their Report, the monitors state that
3 ACS has made progress in all areas. The monitors
4 also flaunted the ACS's focus on Youth Development
5 Specialist retention, advocacy to implement incentive
6 bonuses for YDS attendance, and the enhanced efforts
7 to recruit and hire YDS.

8 In early May, ACS released our concept paper for
9 the Close to Home juvenile placement and aftercare
10 system, which is the system of care for youth who
11 have been adjudicated juvenile delinquents by the
12 Family Court. The concept paper describes a smaller,
13 more robust system of care, including smaller
14 facility size, increased salaries for provider agency
15 staff, and enhanced staffing. There are no new FY
16 '23 cuts to ACS in the Executive Budget. As
17 discussed previously, the budget includes additional
18 funding so that ACS will have \$30.7 million baselined
19 for Fair Futures.

20 In addition, the Budget includes \$60 million CTL
21 in FY23, to cover a Title IV-E budget gap created by
22 the federal government. The federal eligibility
23 includes an income test tied to whether or not a
24 family would have been eligible for AFDC in 1996.

1
2 This outdated methodology results in fewer and fewer
3 children being IV-E eligible each year.

4 Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention
5 that while we are very pleased that the State budget
6 includes additional funding for child care, I am
7 disappointed in the additional costs shifts that the
8 State created for child welfare. The State enacted
9 legislation to significantly increase the subsidies
10 for foster parents, which you of course support,
11 adopted parent and kinship guardians but did not
12 include any additional state funding for localities
13 to implement these higher rates. While of course we
14 support these rates, we believe that the state should
15 share the implementation costs.

16 And finally, while we are pleased that the state
17 included a 5.4 percent COLA for foster care providers
18 and some funding for it, we were disappointed that
19 the state did not include this COLA to the hard-
20 working staff in our prevention programs. Thank you
21 for the opportunity to testify and I'm happy to take
22 questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Commissioner. I
24 want to jump right into it. I want to talk a little
25 bit first about the child care funding. The FY23

1
2 State Enacted Budget included \$7 billion statewide
3 and \$4 billion for New York City over four years.

4 Uhm, what does ACS estimate – what is the estimate
5 for how much additional funding including through the
6 Child Care Block Grant will eventually be reflected
7 in the '23 budget and how many vouchers or seats do
8 we think it will generate?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we're still working on
10 those exact numbers and I'll ask Deputy Commissioner
11 for Finance to speak to some of that but I do want to
12 share that we are working through the entire wait
13 list and then in the summer will be launching a
14 process by which families can apply for childcare and
15 we can continue to get vouchers out. We have
16 sufficient resources, not only to work through the
17 whole wait list but then to across the city,
18 significantly increase voucher distribution to
19 eligible families.

20 And so, as we are working through that with our
21 city partners at OMB, we have a full green light to
22 move aggressively to sign families up for child care
23 subsidies. Michael.

24 MICHAEL MOISEYEV: Thank you. Uhm, that's
25 exactly right, we are still working through the exact

1
2 number that will be available next year but we are at
3 a point where funding is sufficient and it all comes
4 down to eligibility. So, we're really accelerating
5 our efforts to determine eligibility, help families
6 through the process. We put some resources behind
7 speeding up that process over the past year and so,
8 without question, there is substantial funding. I
9 want to be careful about using an exact number but as
10 you can imagine with \$4 billion across four years,
11 we're talking in the billion dollar range in any
12 given year.

13 So, we'll work with you and let you know as soon
14 as we finalize those but we are working aggressively
15 with families to get them through that eligibility
16 process.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And do you have an estimate
18 on how many more families you'll be able to provide
19 vouchers with the newly expanded eligibility
20 requirements?

21 JESS DANNHAUSER: We don't have an exact
22 estimate. It depends, the prize of the voucher
23 depends on age. It depends on a number of variables.
24 We can keep you updated on the number of families
25 that we are signing up and enrolling and providing

1 vouchers to and the number of families that apply.

2 In addition to obviously being able to outreach
3 across the city, the new legislation that changes the
4 income eligibility, I think is also – can allow for a
5 lot more families to qualify and we are also trying
6 to really shore up providers by increasing the market
7 rate and to lower the cost on families as well.
8

9 And so we can, I think the best way we can
10 continue to keep you updated is to look at actually
11 who is applying over the course of the next several
12 months and then show you the cost of that depending
13 on the age of the children applying or the families
14 who are applying.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How many seats do we
16 estimate would be generated over the next two fiscal
17 years as a result of the uhm, the two child care tax
18 credits?

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: We don't have that estimate for
20 you Chair Brannan but we can work with our city
21 partners to try to provide it to you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, yeah, I mean I
23 haven't – you haven't been able to give me one number
24 yet, so I need to get these numbers and the only
25 numbers we know are the \$4 billion. We don't know

1
2 how it's being spent. You know we need timelines on
3 this stuff. We need to know how it's being spent
4 efficiently. So, we'll follow-up with you on that.

5 STEPHANIE GENDELL: I feel it would be helpful to
6 talk about the difference between a child care
7 voucher and a contracted child care seat but just to
8 be clear, ACS administers the child care voucher
9 system. And so, a parent takes the voucher wherever
10 they want to go and DOE administers the contracted
11 system that would be expanding capacity for seats in
12 a contracted system.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So, even for some of these
14 estimates, when do you think you'd be able to get
15 them to us?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: Well, we'll work with our city
17 partners and get back to you. I think just on
18 average, want to give you that it's about \$9,000 for
19 each voucher. That's an average of what we've
20 experienced in the past for applications. But we'll
21 continue to work with our city partners and get you
22 the answer as expeditiously as possible.

23 MICHAEL MOISEYEV: And just to quickly amend that
24 we've been working through the implications of the
25 new market rate. This is really hot off the press in

1
2 the last day or so. We're very excited about the
3 higher new market rate numbers. It is looking like
4 the cost will be now somewhere in the \$13,000 range
5 going forward. We're finalizing those numbers and we
6 will have a lot more for you in the coming weeks.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, yeah, I mean, so we'd
8 like to - just to recap, we'd like to know how many
9 seats, just an estimate of how many seats we think
10 will be generated over the next two fiscal years as a
11 result of the two tax credits and an idea of how many
12 more families we think will be able to provide the
13 vouchers for with the new - the expanded eligibility
14 requirements. Let's talk about baby formula. So,
15 uhm, you know according to the news, in the tristate
16 area, infant formula is over 40 percent out of stock.
17 30 members of the Council's Women's Caucus wrote to
18 the mayor this week demanding action to address the
19 current baby formula shortage. This is a concern
20 that's shared by the entire Council, certainly not
21 just the Women's Caucus. And all of our
22 constituents, whether they are parents or not, uhm,
23 the members requested tighter monitoring of priceable
24 price gouging and in addition to whatever swift
25 action we can take as a city to purchase the

1
2 available formula. So, how is ACS supporting
3 families through the Family Enrichment Centers or
4 through other services or programs to ensure
5 childrens nutrition and also, how many families reach
6 out to ACS for this type of assistance?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we are uhm, right now to
8 start, I want to share that in our child protective
9 specials offices, we also and a few of them have
10 pantries now that are - have adequate formula
11 supplies and they've been distributing. We also have
12 a program across all of our child protective offices
13 to get supplies and services including formula and
14 so, we're delivering it to families. I don't have
15 the exact number. We have an adequate supply at our
16 children center as well and we've been working with
17 our providers gift cards and other ways to make sure
18 that we can make sure that families have formula.
19 That's obviously a significant concern to us. We're
20 also working with health and hospitals and been
21 encouraging getting messages out to communities that
22 normally is available through public hospitals. And
23 we want to make sure that we can do anything we can
24 for this. It is available to get it to families.
25 Our providers have been doing work in local

1
2 communities in addition to make sure that families
3 have the formula that they need.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the thinking as far
5 as its impact on New York City parents and guardians?
6 When do we think the crunch here will subside?

7 JESS DANNHAUSER: You know, what we've heard at
8 the federal level is that it's going to take - it
9 could take a couple months. We're doing everything
10 we can to stay on top of that with state partners as
11 well.

12 Obviously anything that adds stress to families
13 is something that we are concerned about and want to
14 ameliorate as quickly as possible. I also want you
15 to know that we do not see an absence of formula or
16 as an issue for child protection. Our job is to in
17 those situations, get families the help that they
18 need and that's what our child protective day program
19 is working to provide. And so, we're keeping a very
20 close eye on this and preventive services and foster
21 care, obviously also crucial that our children center
22 has adequate supply and thankfully so far we're in
23 good stead in that regard.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I'm moving along to
25 budget risk of the state and federal. The

1
2 termination of the federal Title IV-E waiver,
3 represents a major risk to baseline funding for ACS.
4 There is a cost shift to the city of \$60 million in
5 the Executive Budget for FY23. So, what are the
6 anticipated gaps moving forward? Do we anticipate
7 it's going to be \$60 million a year?

8 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are looking at that with
9 OMB. I think that is likely unless there is change
10 at the federal level. This is a cliff that the
11 federal government has created. The IV-E Waiver
12 Chair Brannan as you mentioned, allowed for stable
13 funding from the federal government. That sunset-ed
14 along with the family first implementation.

15 The parts of the Family First Implementation are
16 in place but a major part around preventive funding
17 is not in place. The state has put its plan for
18 prevention funding, it's a statewide plan into the
19 federal government in preparation to begin to draw
20 down federal funds. So, it is an analysis that's
21 been required, looking at how much in federal funds
22 will come for prevention and really important to us
23 that OMB put the \$60 million in the budget, which
24 really allows us to make sure we can commit to our
25 providers that the support that we put into the new

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2 contract extensions is there and I could talk a
3 little bit more about that later if folks wish.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And how will the state
5 foster care market rates impact ACS's budget?

6 JESS DANNHAUSER: The state hasn't promulgated
7 those rates yet. We are disappointed that they have
8 not put any resources into our budget for those
9 rates. Obviously, we are enthusiastic support for
10 additional financing for foster parents, for kinship
11 parents and for adopted parents. But the state
12 decided not to provide any additional funding for
13 that, which is a real disappointment.

14 So, we are working with OMB. As soon as those
15 rates are promulgated, we've told our providers and
16 our foster parent networks and we will get those out
17 as expeditiously as possible. It is a real
18 commitment of ours but we cannot give a fair estimate
19 until we are hear from the state what the rates are
20 going to be.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, so is the
22 anticipation that the administration would backfill
23 the total amount that maybe mandated by the higher
24 rates?

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: We're going to have to find a
3 way to make sure that it's funded. I think part of
4 the you know the \$60 million that is put in helps
5 make sure our budget is strong and we're going to be
6 working with OMB throughout the year to make sure
7 that the funding is there to provide for those rates.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, with ARPA, what's the
9 amount of ARPA funding in the Executive Plan? And I
10 guess, our concern is the risk from its lapse in FY25
11 modest since a few ACS initiatives were supported
12 with ARPA funds.

13 JESS DANNHAUSER: Michael, can you speak to this?

14 MICHAEL MOISEYEV: Yeah, the ARPA funding in our
15 budget is actually very modest. It was just an
16 ongoing being used to support the indirect cost rate
17 initiative. I can make sure we send your staff the
18 exact numbers but it's actually a fairly small
19 number.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, uhm, just a couple
21 more. So, with regard to the secure detention
22 facility renovations. So, the total amount planned
23 for reconstruction at detention facilities across the
24 five year capital plan, is \$343.9 million, which
25 represents about 60 percent of ACS's plan.

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2 Can you provide an update and timeline on the
3 Phase Two renovations? And are there any design or
4 construction milestones that are coming up?

5 JESS DANNHAUSER: We just met an important
6 milestone on the design front. We were able to
7 identify a vendor. First Deputy Commissioner, do you
8 want to speak to this? I do want to share as I'm
9 asking to it, this is a really important capital
10 project. It's going to expand vocational education,
11 mental health and family visiting spaces in our two
12 detention centers. One at Horizon and one, at
13 crossroads. We're also making sure that there are a
14 number of milestones that are priority including
15 making sure that we move from sort of tradition keys
16 to electronic keys of \$17 million in the budget to
17 make sure that we make that change and I'll turn it
18 to First Deputy Commissioner to speak to a little bit
19 about the where we are in the design process.

20 WINETTE SAUNDERS: Sure, so good afternoon
21 esteemed colleagues. I just want to start off by
22 saying that ACS is committed to providing safe and
23 age and developmentally appropriate settings for
24 young people regardless of where they may be cared
25 for within our agency.

1
2 As a result, the funding will be utilized to
3 support improvements and expansions to spaces for
4 education, vocational programming, as well as
5 visitation areas for family in our youth. It will
6 also support critical areas of functionality within
7 each building including but not limited to kitchen,
8 medical and mental health spaces.

9 We just recently identified a vendor who will
10 support us, an architecture firm who will support us
11 in the development of the design and we can share
12 with you uhm, the timeline as it gets developed.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Uhm, how would
14 education enhancements improve students experience in
15 detention after the renovations and how much is
16 budgeted for educational spaces?

17 JESS DANNHAUSER: So -

18 WINETTE SAUNDERS: So -

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: I'm sorry, go ahead Winette.

20 WINETTE SAUNDERS: You sure. I can start off by
21 saying that the majority of the funding is focused on
22 uhm, expansion for programmatic space, which includes
23 education. The education options would change
24 tremendously as we're focused on vocational and
25

1
2 focused on the number of older youth that are coming
3 into our facilities.

4 So, it's really going to speak to the need that
5 all youth may not be interested in traditional
6 education. While we offer traditional education
7 route, GED, we also want to be able to expand on
8 vocational training that will include automotive,
9 plumbing, carpentry, electrical. Right now, we have
10 OSHA and we also have culinary etiquette but we
11 really want to expand those options so young people
12 can have access and really take a look at what their
13 interests might be and incorporate their voice into
14 what the curriculum will look like in the future.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And last one for me. So,
16 the plan brings \$12.2 million forward from FY27 to 22
17 but does ACS anticipate that funding actually being
18 spent this year or will a future plan roll it out
19 again?

20 JESS DANNHAUSER: Are you speaking specifically
21 to the capital?

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, sorry, yes.

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yeah, Michael, do you want to
24 take that?

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MICHAEL MOISEYEV: Sure, absolutely. We will certainly do our best to begin spending it. Capital construction is a very lengthy process but we've received approval to move forward on the design. After that we'll be begin spending money. We will move to the construction stage in the next, about a two year timeframe and then that will really accelerate to the spend down. So, we'll certainly do our best to spend it as quickly as possible and oh and Chair too, to answer your previous question, there is \$9 million of ARPA you know funding in our budget.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Oh great, okay that's helpful.

STEPHANIE GENDELL: Also, I have one more prior answer. We were able to figure out that the city's estimating will be about \$17,000 new seats created from the childcare tax credits.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Great, thank you Stephanie. I appreciate that.

Okay, Michael, Stephanie, Commissioner Dannhauser, I appreciate this. I'm going to turn it over now to uh, Deputy Speaker Ayala, my favorite Council Member.

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JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Chair Brannan.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank you Chair Brannan. It's nice to see you Commissioner. I hope everything is well. My question is regarding Fair Futures funding and Fair Futures funding rises in the Executive Budget plan to \$30.7 million. Can you confirm that the funding is sufficient to support services for all, justice involved and foster youth up to the age of 26?

JESS DANNHAUSER: Yes, so we - it will absolutely allow us to fully expand the model for foster care youth to 21-26. As you know, we've been doing that work for several years now for younger youth. We are meeting very soon with advocates, providers, to really plan out in a cocreated way the next steps there and we're really thrilled to be able to be the first in the country to make this kind of commitment.

On the justice side, I want to just make sure I'm providing you with the full detail there. We are starting it in the way in which we started the foster care programs. So, we're working with young people who are currently in the continuum and that will be working over years to build out that commitment to

1
2 them for the full Fair Future Model and we'll be
3 working with OMB on that. So, we'll be rolling out
4 some enhancements to contracts but also are planning
5 potentially have an RFP to be able to do some of that
6 Fair Futures work in our juvenile justice continuum.

7 But we are just starting that work as opposed to
8 we're in foster care and we've been doing that for a
9 few years now.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Sorry, allergies, allergies,
11 oh my goodness. Of the approximately 4,000 youth
12 that may be served in Fiscal Year 2023, do we know
13 what the break out looks like by age range and will
14 certain youth receive services before others?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have about 3,000 who are
16 in care. So, under 21 or under and then about 1,000
17 in the 21-26 range who age out. We are you know
18 going to be getting as quickly as possible
19 allocations out to providers. You know consistent
20 within their current contracts and making sure that
21 they can begin to hire staff and do outreach to young
22 people.

23 When I was at a provider agency, we launched a
24 program to coach young people who were leaving foster
25 care 21-26. It takes a substantial resource

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2 intensity on the front end to make sure that we are
3 reaching out, not just with a ladder, not just with a
4 phone call but going to try and visit them, sit down,
5 have a meal, and really re-engage them in working
6 with them on whatever they want to work on as you
7 know. Whether it's education or career or they need
8 support for housing, we're really excited about this.
9 It's going to be a new learning curve for some of our
10 providers and we're going to be thrilled that there's
11 also funding to continue the collaboration with not
12 only nonprofit providers but with our philanthropic
13 partners and consultants who have created a really
14 wonderful implementation approach. There's a
15 learning collaborative that coaches come together
16 very often. They share best practices and we're
17 really looking forward to building on that for the 21
18 to 26 year old's.

19 So, we can keep you posted on how quickly we're
20 engaging. It's obviously a real priority to finally
21 end this cliff created when young people age out of
22 care. I also want to say we are going to encourage
23 and allow providers to work with young people who
24 achieve permanency, right. So, if they go home or if
25 they go through kinship guardianship or adopted at

17, 18, we don't want to let go of that either right.

We want to make sure that we continue to support their education and career path raise. So, this is not just for young people who are aging out of care. It's a commitment to young people who the city has taken into their care to make sure that they have everything they need to succeed in school and career.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I appreciate that. I really do. Do we know work occurrence that is of the foster care RFP is?

JESS DANNHAUSER: I do. Uhm, we are, we decided to extend contracts for another year and that extension will begin on July 1st. We are grateful to OMB that they include all of resources that are in the RFP in this contract extension as we complete the best and final offer. Part of the RFP contracts, uhm, excuse me, the foster care contracts. Those will be in place. We're going to for this Fiscal Year, we'll be on the contract extension. For next fiscal year, they'll be fully in place and we are on time for that.

One thing I want to mention about the contract extensions and ultimately the new contracts, is this is the first time that ACS will be paying providers

1
2 on a budget basis. And so, we have often lamented
3 that the pay for foster care is sort of head in a bed
4 if you will.

5 So, for each day a child is in care, that's not
6 consistent with our values. Our values are to have
7 foster care where children return home safely or they
8 achieve another permanency pathway quickly. I would
9 not want foster care to be a long term. But the
10 money would actually – you get paid more the longer
11 children stay in care. I don't believe that
12 providers were keeping kids in care but we weren't
13 allowing them to really think through a thoughtful
14 budget. They were estimating the number of children
15 in the care in order to complete their budget and
16 decide on the investments that they can make in that
17 given year.

18 So, moving to a budget basis is a complicated
19 effort and I thank Michael and his team for doing
20 that and working with the state but we're making it
21 complex on our finance team so it's simple for
22 providers to make investments that will work for
23 families and for young people.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: When was the last time that
25 the rates were adjusted?

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: The last time that the – the
3 NSAR rates that the state sends are adjusted on an
4 ongoing basis and the depend on the spending of
5 particular provider in any given year. We're also
6 trying to bring some consistency to that but they
7 have been adjusted on an ongoing basis.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Regarding the family
9 enrichment centers, we've discussed that we have –
10 you know we have been a long standing Council –
11 there's a longstanding Council priority and it's
12 excellent to see that the current administration
13 follows through on the previous administrations
14 expansion plan. So, what is the current status of
15 the nine family enrichment centers that are expected
16 to open in 2023? And will they open on time?

17 JESS DANNHAUSER: We are on track. We are
18 working with all of the providers to register the
19 contracts on time and I just want to thank Deputy
20 Mayor Williams-Isom and Deputy Mayor Wright and MOCs
21 and the Comptroller and OMB whose focused very, very
22 significant manual. This is also a priority for the
23 Council to make sure contracts are registered on time
24 and we have come together across city agencies to
25 really make sure that we are aggressively moving this

1
2 forward. We're working with any providers. We have
3 a number of new providers to ACS, as I mentioned in
4 my testimony which we're thrilled about. We're going
5 to be FAC providers that are really embedded in their
6 local communities and so, we are working with them
7 to, if they're knew to us, to make sure that they
8 understand our processes and get all the support they
9 need to keep us on time.

10 They will begin looking for sites but the work
11 begins even before that. Uhm, there will be tabling
12 at community events, going to community boards,
13 meeting with local schools and service providers and
14 really getting the word out about the services that
15 are available. But also the opportunity to join them
16 in the planning for what the FEC and that community
17 will focus on and offer.

18 As you know, these are codesigned with the
19 community. And so, that work will begin as soon as
20 they identify their leadership and they'll have the
21 resources to do that starting in the fiscal year.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I mean, that's great but has
23 there been any additional funding allocated to
24 support the outreach efforts?
25

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: There has, we have \$100 for
3 upfront costs and that's for a variety of costs. But
4 this is a unique contract that really focuses on
5 helping providers start up successfully and uhm so
6 that \$100,000 is an important part of it. So, the
7 first year budget, that will be \$650,000 when on an
8 ongoing budget is \$550,000.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Is that just for outreach to
10 providers or does that include you know parents and
11 community members as well?

12
13 JESS DANNHAUSER: Across the board. Across the
14 board.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We're excited. We're going
16 to get one here in East Harlem and we have one in the
17 Bronx, so that's excellent.

18 From January 2022 through March 6th, ACS assigned
19 12.9 percent of cases to CARES, which is ACS's
20 alternative response program for child investigations
21 where the child is not in immediate danger. Can you
22 tell us what the percentage of cases that were that
23 were assigned to CARES from March to today? And is
24 ACS expanding from 32 CARE units today to 48 units by
25 the end of 2022?

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yes, we are. We are at about
3 13 to 14 percent, so we're a tick up but and we
4 continue to see not all the CARES units. We seen the
5 CARES units caseloads grow, which in this case is
6 actually a good thing. And so there are around eight
7 or nine now and so we are working to continuously
8 refer to CARES. We're working with our - we call our
9 applications team which is doing the tracking to make
10 sure that there are supported in their judgement
11 about what goes down the CARES track and what goes
12 through a traditional investigation.

13 I mentioned in my testimony this change to our
14 emergency children services, which I think will also
15 help. Uhm, because we will no longer be initiating
16 night time investigations unless there are
17 allegations of imminent safety issues. And so, uhm,
18 because we are not and CARES starts with a phone call
19 from the borough office, talking to the parents,
20 letting them know about CARES because it's a
21 voluntary choice that the parents make.

22 And so, then the child protective specialist goes
23 out after that phone call and agreed upon time and
24 begins to do the work with the family to assess
25 safety but also to assess all of the services that

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they may need or wish to avail themselves of. And so, since we won't be initiating those investigations in the evening, the borough office can make that phone call the next day and we think this also will help increase the number of families going to the CARES track. We are on track to continue to expand the units by the end of this year and have investments to be able to expand even further in the year beyond.

Our hope in this next 18-months is to get to about 25 percent, 26 percent of all families that we receive investigations on to be started on the CARES track.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, what is the total cost of the fiscal '23 expansion at full impact?

JESS DANNHAUSER: It's mostly a cost shift. Uhm, so, we are - you're typically converting child protection specialists with experience in what we call our protective diagnostic units to CARES. I don't have the exact number for what the cost will be for the total 64. It's definitely May or Macro May but it is a cost shift. It's sort of a reinvestment from an investigative approach to a CARES approach.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Do you anticipate -

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2 STEPHANIE GENDELL: No actual new cost because we
3 convert the regular CPS units into CARES units.
4 Obviously they go through training but we have you
5 know training built into our budget separately, So,
6 there's no real new cost.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Will the expansion impact the
8 percentage of cases assigned to CARES?

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: No, we — you know we are
10 looking at case loads for cares similar to other CPS
11 case loads to stay under the national standard of 12
12 and we are anticipating that with the units that we
13 bring online. If investigations stay at about —
14 excuse me, if allegations and that CR calls stay
15 about the same way, then we can get to that 25
16 percent with that number of units.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Right. Uhm, moving on to
18 juvenile justice, uh, the Council called for \$5
19 million in investments to provide innovative skill
20 building programming into secure detention
21 facilities. How much is in the Fiscal Year 2023
22 Budget for leadership building programming at ACS
23 juvenile justice facilities?

24 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, this is really, really
25 important to us. The programming that young people

1
2 receive in our detention centers at Horizon and the
3 Bronx and Crossroads and Brooklyn is vital and we are
4 working really hard right now to reimagine some of
5 those services. As older, young people have become
6 with us and First Deputy Commissioner spoke to this a
7 little bit earlier and I'll ask her to speak a little
8 bit more to it. Uhm, but we you know appreciate the
9 Council's focus on this area. It's really important.
10 You may know that we recently brought on new
11 leadership for our division of youth and family
12 justice, Nancy Ginsberg is now our Deputy
13 Commissioner. She's been here for four or five weeks
14 and has been very on the ground both at Horizon and
15 Crossroads.

16 Nancy has a 30-year career at Legal Aid working
17 with young people and defending young people who are
18 in our detention and we are really, really pleased to
19 have such a fantastic youth advocate there. She's
20 working very closely with the Department of Education
21 to reengage young people in school. Our young people
22 in detention. Some young people across the city you
23 know had a real tough time during the pandemic. We
24 had issues in the buildings obviously, thankfully
25 that is not the case today and hopefully we can stay

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2 that way and so, we're working hard around school.
3 First Deputy, do you want to add a little bit about
4 the programming work?

5 WINETTE SAUNDERS: Sure, first and foremost, I
6 just wanted to say to Chair Ayala, I just want to
7 thank you and Council Member Salamanca for coming out
8 a couple of weeks ago to uhm, discuss and you know
9 share with us some of your vision and we were able to
10 share ours. It was really an inspirational
11 discussion we had and still being spoken about. So,
12 thank you for that.

13 Just to piggyback on what the Commissioner has
14 stated with regard to programming at detention. You
15 know currently we're doing a lot of discussions with
16 our young people to really hear from them what they
17 want, what they like so that we can really make sure
18 that we integrate what is - integrate into our
19 current offering, the things that they have interest
20 in. Right now, uhm, some of the most popular
21 programming includes music production, creative
22 writing, of course song writing, culinary arts, art
23 therapy, the Cure Violence sessions with credible
24 messengers and horticulture. And you know, there are
25 uhm, several, several discussions with our partners

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2 and DOE on how to continue incentivizing engagement
3 and we're really looking forward to continuing those
4 discussions with many of our stakeholders and
5 continuing to talk to our young people to make sure
6 that we are offering things that they have interest
7 in.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm excited. We want to hear
9 from them directly. We want to engage them in wage
10 gap you know that they can appreciate. Go ahead
11 Commissioner, sorry.

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: I was just going to add that we
13 are looking forward to freedom school and invite
14 Council Members to join us. We're thinking you know
15 very carefully. Freedom school is the summer time
16 school work with the DOE and I've learned in my
17 months here that it's really a time where kids engage
18 and enjoy and love school. And so, the question for
19 us is how do you keep that momentum going into the
20 fall? And so, we are in the thoughts of planning for
21 freedom school but also thinking about, how do we
22 make sure that becomes year around levels of
23 engagement for young people? And we think we have
24 some good ideas obviously first and foremost from our
25 young people.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Are we having conversations
3 with OMB about funding for the programming?

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: We have sufficient funding for
5 this programming. We have had some real focus of
6 late to OMB support to bring in additional program
7 counselors, case managers to make sure that we speak
8 often as we should about the YDS and our special
9 officers who are the front line in our detention
10 centers but there's a number of important roles
11 around vocation and career and so, we're thrilled
12 that we just got a number of folks who are joining us
13 in those roles and we have sufficient funding to
14 support that. So, we think we're in good shape also
15 with the addition of — as we role in Fair Futures to
16 detention, that will bring additional staffing of
17 coaches into the buildings.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: The alternatives to the
19 detention program has no change in its budget in the
20 executive plan. How many ATD programs are there and
21 why aren't we seeing any expansion?

22 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have taken the ATD
23 programs are new to ACS and we just released a
24 concept paper. We're going to get feedback from the
25 providers. ATD's are part of a much you know larger

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2 continuum of preventive services. We have our JJI
3 initiative which provides in home family supports and
4 treatments.

5 We have our FAP initiative, who also serves
6 youth. So, it's part of a larger continuum. We
7 would be happy to discuss you know work to continue
8 to expand and reach of those. At the moment, our
9 focus to make sure that those programs are fully
10 utilized and outreach into families. Like so many
11 other things Chair Ayala, during the pandemic
12 utilization came down and so, our current focus is
13 really around getting out to young people in
14 communities to make sure that they know and avail
15 themselves with the services that exist.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Is any of the funding uhm
17 allocated towards mental health for youth involved in
18 the justice system?

19 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yes, mental health is embedded
20 in our JJI programs and the FAP programs. And just
21 to clarify on ATD, it's one per borough at the
22 moment.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Okay, I have one final
24 question. Uh, Speaker Adams was not able to make it
25 but she did have a question on the impact of children

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2 who lost parents during the pandemic. Our city
3 residents continue to face continued risk of
4 hospitalization and death from COVID-19. Before
5 approximately 8,600 of our children, the impact of
6 the pandemic will forever be felt. As COVID took
7 away their parents or caregiver. Parent or caregiver
8 deaths due to COVID disproportionately impacted our
9 city's minority communities including Black, Hispanic
10 and Asian children.

11 We as a city, as a community, need to come
12 together to support these children during this
13 difficult time. Does ACS know who these children are
14 and what, if anything, is ACS doing to support the
15 children and their families?

16 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, thank you for this question
17 Deputy Speaker and to the Speaker for raising this.
18 It has obviously taking a huge toll on many
19 communities across our city. We are – all of the
20 work that we're doing in preventive services with
21 family enrichment centers with childcare, we think is
22 the best response to this to continue to expand and
23 get the supports out to families.

24 In addition to so many young people losing their
25 parent or primary care giver, we know families are

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2 further strained. Than a grandparent who used to be
3 an essential part of caring for a child you know,
4 watching after them, babysitting and just being such
5 an important source of stability and strength have
6 been lost as well and so, families are under
7 additional stress and we want to make sure everything
8 that we do is to support family members.

9 I do think the rate adjustments for parents who
10 are caring for their or kindship or foster parents
11 who are uncles, aunts, grandparents and for adoptive
12 or previous kin gap, which we call the Guardianship
13 Program, this additional resources for them as well.
14 We know a lot of our families are taken care of
15 children who have lost their primary caregiver. We
16 don't have a specific number of course and we don't
17 think it's appropriate for us to sort of assume that
18 there's a challenge there or a problem there but we
19 want to make sure that our outreach around childcare
20 and family enrichment centers and preventive is
21 really available to all these families. Stephanie,
22 would you like -

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: But we also don't want to
24 assume Commissioner that we don't have a problem
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2 there right. Like is there, is there like a process
3 for –

4 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Yeah, so, I can jump in here.
5 We've been – this is something we've been monitoring
6 pretty closely since the start of the pandemic,
7 especially if you could think back to March 2020, we
8 really weren't sure what was going to happen and this
9 pandemic, there are things that is all on the way.
10 So, we've been continuing to monitor that. And the
11 good news is that uhm, there's actually a very small
12 number of children who have come into foster care due
13 to losing parents or a parent or parents to COVID.
14 It's like less than a handful. That means that these
15 kids who have lost their primary caregivers have been
16 taking in outside of foster care, you know either
17 their other parent or other relatives are caring for
18 them and so, I think all the items that the
19 Commissioner mentioned about, our family enrichment
20 centers and prevention services and really ensuring
21 that these new primary care givers have what they
22 need, unrelated to foster care but out in the
23 community that the services and supports they need is
24 critical. And that's why we continue to push those
25 services out to the community.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Are there children – are you
3 also trying to identify the number of children that
4 are already in the system whose parents may have
5 passed away as a result of COVID?

6 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Yeah, that was part of our
7 look, it's very, very small.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, okay, that's a good
9 thing but even for those – for that small minute
10 number of children. I mean, I just lost my mother in
11 January and I'm still traumatized and you know it's
12 been a psychological rollercoaster, so I can only
13 imagine. You know I'm going to 50-years-old; what it
14 feels like to a nine-year-old, you know a five-year-
15 old a ten-year-old to lose their primary parents.

16 So, you know, is any support being offered I'm
17 assuming through mental health?

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: Absolutely and our provider
19 network has an extensive set of investments, some of
20 them through Medicaid and mental health services.
21 All of our providers provide full and medical mental
22 health services. I also think Chair that this is an
23 important part of – just to lift up our work with
24 kin, with family members for a young person. Even
25 though it's just a handful as you said, uhm, we

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2 really want to make sure they have everything that
3 they need and that they're in a familiar environment.

4 And so, currently, I mentioned that we have 43
5 percent of children in foster care with family or an
6 extended relationship that preceded them coming into
7 care. And it's even better around the placements
8 initially this year. So, right about 55 percent of
9 children who are coming into our care today are being
10 placed with family members. And obviously when a
11 child has experienced trauma, being around somebody
12 familiar is really, really important. And so, our
13 job is to support that kinship foster parent as best
14 we possibly can, not only with appropriate financial
15 resources which the range will help but with all
16 sorts of social supports. And our providers are
17 doing a good job at doing that.

18 And we know because we hear foster parents but
19 also because children in kinship care are very stably
20 placed. They are less likely to move in foster care
21 if they're placed with kin.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I can appreciate and I can
23 appreciate how difficult your work is and I look
24 forward to coming back this summer to meet with some
25 of the young people at some of the juvenile detention

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2 sites. And I will wrap up there because we have a
3 couple of colleagues that have questions.

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And I'm coming.

6 WINETTE SAUNDERS: Thank you. Looking forward.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Uhm, Malcom.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Malcom, you're still on mute.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, it's Friday everyone,
10 sorry. I just want to say we've also been joined by
11 Council Members Barron and Carr. We will turn to
12 Council Member questions in the order of hands are
13 Cabán, Barron and Brewer. We'll start with Council
14 Member Cabán.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. Really
17 appreciate it. So, I want to talk a little bit about
18 the child care voucher system. Obviously, most of
19 our child care programs are funded through the
20 federal child care and development fund and it
21 restricts eligibility to kids who are U.S. citizens.
22 And although federal guidance does provide an
23 exemption from verifying immigration status for child
24 care provided in settings subject to public education
25 standards, New York does not to date exercise that

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2 exemption. And proposals to include undocumented
3 families in New York States recent child care
4 expansion were not included in the state enacted
5 budget.

6 So, just two questions for you all. You know has
7 ACS previously explored ways to use city funding to
8 ensure undocumented children have access to the same
9 early childhood care and education programs as other
10 children? And then, would ACS support making city
11 funded early childhood education and care vouchers
12 available to the relatively small number of children
13 currently ineligible for the CCDF funded childcare
14 vouchers due to their immigration status?

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Council Member. I'm
16 going to turn it to Stephanie because we have
17 advocated for this. It's important to us. It's a
18 state law and we think it would be very helpful to be
19 able to extend support to families regardless of
20 immigration status.

21 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Yeah I can start by saying,
22 the premise of your question is something we
23 absolutely support. We want these children to be
24 able to participate in child care and benefit from
25 the programs, and for their parents to benefit for

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2 this support. We've been advocating both at the
3 federal and state level for this change. So far,
4 unsuccessfully. So, I'll first start by saying
5 anything that Council can do to assist that advocacy
6 would be appreciate. In terms of CTL, that's an
7 interesting concept and I think we need to explore
8 that further.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Well, I certainly would
10 love to support and help explore that further and I
11 know that some our colleagues probably would be
12 onboard with that too. So, I look forward to staying
13 in touch and you know those are my questions and I
14 will seed the rest of my time.

15 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
18 Cabán. Next, we'll turn to Council Member Barron.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh, thank you very much.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COUNCIL MEMEBR BARRON: You know what I'm
22 concerned about and the whole foster care system.
23 First of all, a lot of money is made by these
24 organizations and companies contracting out so called
25 foster care services. Often times the care, the

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2 money goes more to agency administrator stuff
3 sometimes or organizational administrators than it
4 actually gets to the child and the care of the child.

5 So, I would like to know more about that and
6 about kinship care and how we can prevent you know
7 some of these cases. But I'm concerned about just
8 like with the homeless questions I raised around the
9 homeless, there is a lot of not-for-profits and for
10 profit organizations making a lot of money off our
11 misery. Whether it's child care services or homeless
12 care services or workforce development and all of
13 these. Usually White not-for-profits or for profits,
14 make big money off of contracting with city agencies.
15 So, that's one concern I have.

16 And then the Children Center, the Nicholas
17 Scoppetta Children Center. If you can give me an
18 update on that, what's happening with that. You
19 know, how is that going along. And then child
20 protection, how do you determine when a child should
21 be really removed from the home? I mean that's a
22 very, very challenging thing. A lot of Black people
23 think that they're being abused and that sometimes
24 children are taken from families when they shouldn't
25 and sometimes children are left with families that

1 shouldn't be left with families. So, just how do you
2 determine when a child should be removed and do you
3 make physical home visits, virtual home visits,
4 virtual visits? You know with this pandemic; you
5 know did it turn into virtual visits.
6

7 And then, here's the big one. Raise the Age, the
8 Mayor thinks that we should keep young people, 15,
9 16, 17-year-olds in adult court and in adult
10 facilities as opposed to family court. So, sometimes
11 you know the close to home concept. You know like if
12 they involved in some, let's keep them close to home
13 and then there's detention centers. I remember I
14 used to have; you remember the spot, Burt Detention
15 Center many, many years ago. You know that was a big
16 problem. The Brownsville Detention Center. You know
17 jail, it's a big issue with this child care services,
18 for the Black community in particular. It's a huge
19 issue. Some people are making a lot of money off it
20 and then you can't possibly agree with them. Here is
21 where I'm going to get you in trouble or you are
22 going to give a non-answer. You cannot possibly
23 agree with the Mayor that raise the age is bad. That
24 these young people need to be in adult facilities.
25 The Mayor is wrong and then he couples that with no

1 cash bail. Neither one is what's causing crime.
2 It's poverty, unemployment and mental health
3 challenges and policing is not the issue and
4 certainly detention centers are not the issue. So,
5 you have a very, very – as you already know, heavy
6 responsibility in protecting our children, protecting
7 our youth. Raise the Age simply meant that 16, 17,
8 18-year-old's, that instead of their cases that are
9 non-violent, non-threatening, going to adult court
10 and they're going to adult facilities and become
11 recidivism – increase the recidivism rate, you know
12 go to family court and treat them as the minors that
13 they are. So, Raise the Age he wants to change and
14 just for the record, no cash bail did not cause crime
15 to go up. No cash bail was just simply for those who
16 committed nonviolent misdemeanors. And so, the
17 narrative that that's raising crime and that these
18 young people out there and they are, they have
19 problems and there are some that are involved in that
20 but the answer cannot be more cops and more jails.
21 It has to be more child care protective services,
22 more prevention and more once they do make that
23 mistake and get involved on that level, it has to be
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2 about rehabilitation, not punishment that leads to
3 recidivism. Thank you.

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Council Member. I'll
5 start with your uhm, your question and comment about
6 contracts. I do think this new way that we are going
7 to be funding foster contracts is really important in
8 that regard.

9 Uhm, where we are not going to be paying for each
10 day a child is in care but doing a budget basis.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Expired.

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, that the incentive really
13 become about getting children home safely or with
14 family members permanently. Other family members
15 than their caregiver initially.

16 I think you know the Children Center that you
17 brought up -

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: We'll just back on
19 contracts. You know there's a lot of companies
20 making a lot of money. What are the salaries of like
21 the Executive Directors of some of these
22 organizations that you're contracting out to?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, I can look for that Council
24 Member. I think those agencies are serving across

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2 systems, most of them are not solely contractors with
3 ACS. They raise private dollars. They raise uh -

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I mean what is the ACS
5 allowing for an Executive Director to make in these
6 organizations and same thing like was mention in
7 Samaritan Villages. How much does their Executive
8 Directors, how much do these groups make? You know
9 and what kind of salaries are they making?

10 JESS DANNHAUSER: We have limits on
11 Administrative costs and make sure that the vast
12 majority of the funding goes directly to programming.
13 I think also investments in things like Fair Futures
14 that are going directly to young people and trying to
15 make sure that we're listening to young peoples voice
16 and how budgets are created.

17 We have our own youth leadership Council. We
18 have the Youth Advocacy Board. We're also making -
19 working really hard with other city partners around
20 housing for young people. What you said earlier
21 about the money going to young people and going to
22 families is really important to us.

23 We don't set a cap on the salary. What we do is
24 make sure that only a small percentage goes to
25 anything but direct services to families. I did want

1
2 to just speak to the children center as well. I
3 spent a lot of time there in my first few months.
4 First Deputy Commissioner Saunders has done a great
5 job making it more healing and thoughtful place in
6 staffing and a safe place. So, I'm really indebted
7 to her work that proceeded me and continues.

8 We are working with our providers. We're
9 launching a new process that will be led by Celine
10 Cherry{SP?} whose got a long history. She runs our
11 Youth Leadership Council. She's listened to our
12 young people and for young people who are at the
13 children center, we do a case conference, look at can
14 they go home with services? What is in their
15 absolute best interest? What services can we wrap
16 around them? She's going to bring all parts of our
17 ACS continuum and provider network to bear and really
18 hear from young people, where they want to be and
19 where do they feel most safe.

20 Uhm, I will say to you, the Mayor has pushed us
21 up stream and has told us that he absolutely does
22 support Raise the Age and us continuing this. We
23 think it is absolutely vital that the 16 and 17-year-
24 old's who are arrested come to us. And that we
25 provide them everything that they need in addition to

1
2 making sure that they have access to best counsel,
3 access to their families. That they get the
4 programming and supports that they need.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The Mayor's rhetoric is
6 that he's saying that Raise the Age, he does not
7 support some of it and he wants the youth determined
8 dangerous and to be included in it. Dangerous to
9 who? You know who interprets what dangerous is?

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, he double speaks on
12 that but go ahead.

13 JESS DANNHAUSER: You know and on the CPS front,
14 I want to share that we do a careful analysis. The
15 standard is a major change in the standard of
16 evidence which we supported, continue to support,
17 uhm, where a case is indicated for maltreatment if
18 there is the preponderance of evidence. It used to
19 be just some credible evidence and we're seeing our
20 indication rate come down as a result of that. Those
21 families still are offered supportive services,
22 preventive services if they'd like it. The standard
23 is imminent risk of harm and during the pandemic, the
24 courts accepted only emergency applications. And we
25 learned a lot from that. We were able to keep

1
2 children safe with our preventive services, bringing
3 less into court.

4 We're also starting a pilot Council Member that
5 I think is really important. In the first visit to a
6 family's home, we will have a flyer. We're starting
7 a pilot in the Bronx and in East Harlem, so they'll
8 have a flyer either for Bronx Defenders or
9 Neighborhood Defenders of Harlem that says, call us
10 for all information about your rights and the
11 resources available to you. So that families can
12 early on understand what their defense can look like.
13 And so, we're excited to be able to roll that out.
14 It's very important that we do our job while
15 assessing safety. It's equally important that
16 families understand their rights.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Council Member Brewer.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much
22 Commissioner. A lot of the wonderful, contracted
23 agencies, and maybe I am not understanding it. This
24 has to do with funding for their staff. Knowing your
25 testimony, I know you mentioned correctly that this

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2 less money for preventive staff members. What they
3 tell me these agencies that they have foster care,
4 obviously support in terms of staff and preventive
5 but the foster care will be able to get some funding,
6 do the COLA's or whatever is so deserved. But the
7 preventive not but it makes it hard on the agencies
8 because how can you have two people working together,
9 one gets increased and the other doesn't. Is that
10 something that is across the board and how are you
11 dealing with it and is that really a situation?

12 JESS DANNHAUSER: Yes, it is and this stems from
13 a state decision to fund the cost of living at \$5.4
14 percent of foster care but not for preventive and
15 we're disappointed in that decision and we look
16 forward to working with the Council as we go forward
17 towards adoption on this.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, because I mean
19 that's not fair to the agencies at all and I don't
20 even know why it should call on the Council. Are you
21 doing anything about it or just waiting for the
22 Council?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: We're in conversations with OMB
24 but understand also that this is an important Council
25 priority, so I would say both.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Next is, when you talk about child care, thank goodness for the funding. Do you talk – is it a situation where DOE, they will be contracting or you will be contracting with nonprofit child care centers or just the one's that are run by the DOE or how is that going to play out? Or you don't know yet because there are obviously lots of nonprofits. There are also a lot of; I'm not so supportive of some of the for-profit child care centers.

So, how does this funding get allocated in terms of spots?

JESS DANNHAUSER: So, ACS only does the voucher system and so, our job is to determine eligibility and get families that voucher, and then they make the choice of where to purchase child care with that voucher. And we work with our DOHMH partners who oversee parts of the certification process and obviously DOE who directly runs these programs. There's availability in the DOE programs and we will be expanding the voucher programs significantly getting through the entire wait list. So, I hope that answers your question. We won't be directly

1
2 contracting with providers through ACS. That's a DOE
3 function at this point.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then NYCHA has
5 family partnership, so I have a lot of situations
6 where there is a family situation at NYCHA. I've got
7 one now with a couple of young people. Mother's on
8 drugs, kids are challenging. So, I guess the first
9 thing we do is we call Family Partnership. I love
10 NYCHA but I can't tell you that their human services,
11 social services are the best. Do you work with them?
12 How many of your cases are at NYCHA? And how do you
13 work with you know those very stressed families and
14 you know how do you work with NYCHA? Because there
15 are a lot of challenges there. I love every one of
16 those families but it's hard. How do you work with
17 family partners guardianship?

18 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, we have community
19 partnership programs as well in a number of
20 communities around the city, including many that have
21 NYCHA facilities. We work with NYCHA when we are
22 advocating for families. They are responsive to us.
23 We use you know we outreach to them to make sure that
24 families in a difficult housing situation. We're
25 also working with them around these housing vouchers,

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2 the emergency housing vouchers, both for young people
3 and for families. We're working with them, with HPD,
4 with DHS. Uhm, and there's lots of on the ground
5 between things like Family Enrichment Centers, NYCHA
6 facilities, things like our Community Partnership
7 programs. We can look to see if we can get you those
8 numbers about the overlap between families who are
9 serving in preventive services or child protective
10 services. And NYCHA, I don't have them for you but
11 we will certainly look to get them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That would be very
13 helpful. I would appreciate that and then, when we
14 talk about the schools. You know we often talk about
15 kids in temporary housing etc., etc., but obviously
16 we know the statistics on the challenges of young
17 people in foster care. I'm a foster care, so I'm
18 aware of it. Foster care slash - and so, I'm just
19 wondering, you know are there dollars allocated that
20 you're following for the young people because your
21 foster kids even though it might come under DOE and
22 not you, do you follow them to make sure that there's
23 appropriate services? Where obviously DOE as you
24 heard, doesn't have their full complement of staff to
25 deal with foster care kids and obviously the social

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2 workers in the schools are far and few between
3 despite a lot of allocations. So, how are you making
4 sure that your kids in foster care go to school?

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you for that Council
7 Member. One piece of this is Fair Futures because it
8 ages down to 11-years-old.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know but you don't have
10 it now. You're getting Fair Futures.

11 JESS DANNHAUSER: For the older kids. We have it
12 for the younger kids.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

14 JESS DANNHAUSER: We get a data run from DOE and
15 work with our providers. We have a very high
16 attendance rate of the younger children. Where we
17 begin to see challenges with attendance is in 9th
18 grade consistent with citywide trends and we are
19 really focused on helping young people and families
20 make good high school applications and decisions, so
21 they're exercising their choice. We're also working
22 on middle school choice, so that we really are making
23 sure that children in foster care avail themselves to
24 choice.

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2 We don't think we are where we need to be on that
3 and so, these investments in all of the education
4 specialists through Fair Futures is really important.
5 And I'm really grateful that Chancellor Banks. We
6 have about five different workstreams going with
7 them. Obviously one for foster care, looking at our
8 child protective relationships. How we do open
9 pathways to preventative services from schools. We
10 don't need a call to the State Central Registry but
11 maybe need a service support for families and we're
12 doing retraining for a lot of DOE teachers this fall
13 that we're working on together. So, we are in - we
14 just had a meeting last week around transportation.
15 So, we are very actively working with DOE and to make
16 sure that 7,000 plus children in foster care have
17 everything that they need. Both from us in getting
18 them there and from DOE.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Could you give us; you
20 know the Committee some dollar figures? Because on
21 the DOE end, it's great but there's nobody home.
22 Maybe there will be but they don't have staff. So, I
23 would appreciate you getting the numbers to the
24 Committee as to what you're putting in in terms of
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2 staff and allocation to make sure that kids are able
3 to finish school.

4 I know Fair Futures, before anybody else. I was
5 there at the first meeting. I got it but they're not
6 all there yet and you know, they can't do it all.
7 So, I'd love to know what your numbers are also.
8 Thank you very much.

9 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thanks, we'll include education
10 specialists at the provider agencies, not Fair
11 Futures and the work that we do. We have staff
12 centrally who coordinate a lot of support on this and
13 we'll get you that.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we'll turn to Council
15 Member Sanchez.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Good afternoon
18 Commissioner and thank you so much for participating
19 in this hearing and good afternoon to our Chairs and
20 thank you for your endurance since this morning.

21 So, my question is around emergency removals uhm,
22 that are extremely traumatic events of course for
23 children. Uhm, and particularly what are ACS's
24 protocols around emergency removals in terms of
25 serving the child. Mental health services, supports,

1
2 long-term supports, because it is, you know these are
3 such traumatic events for the children.

4 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you so much for this
5 question Council Member. We want to avoid emergency
6 removals as often as possible and emergency removals
7 are removals that a child protective specialist and
8 their supervisor and their manager have made a
9 decision that must happen in the moment. Typically,
10 what's happening is that there's not a primary care
11 giver available at that moment. And so, we're making
12 an emergency removal or there's some very significant
13 imminent risk of harm.

14 The protocol is then to hold a child safety
15 conference the very next day or that day, if we can
16 make that happen and then also, following that child
17 safety conference to be into court. I think it's -
18 you know it's important that uhm, you know when we
19 exercise an emergency removal, we are providing
20 information around who are families can reach out for
21 legal counsel of course and that child safety
22 conference information.

23 So, it think often, after the emergency removal
24 at the child safety conference, there are times where
25 we don't even go into court. A parent who is not

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2 available that evening, comes back into town and is
3 able to care for the child. So, we're looking for
4 any solution. It's also that initial child safety
5 conference is part of the reason we have done such a
6 good job around kinship. We're able to get 55
7 percent of new children coming into care with
8 families. But to back up to the original premise, we
9 don't want to be doing emergency removals unless they
10 are absolutely necessary. So, we have very careful
11 quality assurance looks at that and it's something
12 that we watch constantly, not only the rate of
13 emergency removals but our practice within them and
14 whether it was necessary.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you
16 and you know this is anecdote but you know I know it
17 does happen. I remember being a child and it was
18 actually a situation where there was a dispute
19 between my mother and the landlord and the landlord
20 called ACS. I mean, obviously this was a couple
21 years ago but she called ACS in vindictive ways,
22 right. To say that my parents were abusing us, me
23 and my siblings and I know that this does happen, so
24 can you share you know what the sort of thresholds
25 are for emergency removal?

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: Absolutely, so and just to back
3 up that you know false and malicious reporting is
4 something that we are really, really concerned about
5 and want to aggressively pursue solutions around.
6 Uhm, it adds stress to families, as you know. Uhm,
7 so the State Central Registry is making the decision
8 of whether to accept that case. So there's a state
9 decision and then they send it to us. Then there is
10 the decision of whether we can go down the CARES
11 track if there's not a serious abuse allegation, we
12 can go down the CARES track, which would have changed
13 that experience, I imagine.

14 And then finally, when we get to - when we are
15 doing an investigation, it is only on a very, very
16 small percentage of cases that we are seeking any
17 court involvement, less than ten percent. And so, we
18 are most often offering services. Sometimes saying,
19 you know, you know, once we do our safety assessment,
20 sometimes just closing out the case. I think we want
21 to look at ways in which the state can promulgate
22 rules for local districts and social services, so
23 that we can have some administrative process where a
24 family can say, I'm being abused by someone through
25 the SCR, both - sometimes we see false and malicious

1 reporting. There's a lot of conversation about
2 anonymous reports but often they're not anonymous and
3 someone continues to call maliciously. And so, uhm,
4 some administrative process when we could do a review
5 and somehow limit the intrusion on families who are
6 repeatedly being false and maliciously reported
7 against.
8

9 Of course there are criminal penalties for false
10 and malicious reporting but we think an additional
11 administrative process for us to limit the burden on
12 families would be appropriate as well.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much.
15 Chair, if I might be able to ask one more question?

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, that's fine.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay, thank you. Uhm,
18 just quickly Commissioner on the cost of - uhm, the
19 daily cost of youth in detention is \$2,084 per day or
20 over \$760,000 per year. Can you just help us
21 understand why these costs are so high and if ACS has
22 any interventions planned to reduce these costs?

23 JESS DANNHAUSER: So, the costs are so high
24 because detention is very, very staff intensive to
25 keep it safe. That is the primary reason and it's

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2 really important that you know, it's a 24/7
3 operation, so you have currently two tours, we're
4 working back towards three tours of staff and those
5 staff have to be trained and well-qualified. We want
6 to use detention only when you know it's absolutely
7 necessary of course but when young people come into
8 care, we have to make sure that they have the
9 staffing and that they have the schooling and
10 everything that goes into making sure that the
11 detention facility runs safely. At the moment, you
12 know, of the young people who are in our care for
13 more than a week, over half are there on allegations
14 related to charges of attempted murder or murder.
15 And we do not use techniques like pepper spray and
16 don't have other techniques that are intrusive or on
17 young people. So, it has to be what we call staff
18 secure. So, we have to have enough staff to really
19 make sure that young people are safe and can move
20 throughout the building safely and so, it's really
21 important that obviously the rate per day kind of
22 depends on there's fixed costs in the building, so
23 the rate per day fluctuates depending on the number
24 of children who are in our care; 148 as of this
25

1
2 morning. And so those numbers may change but I do
3 think those investments are appropriate.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much
5 Commissioner. Thank you Chair.

6 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thanks Council Member.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
8 Sanchez, I'll turn it over to Chair Ayala for her
9 closing comments and thoughts and then to Chair
10 Brannan.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yeah, uhm, I just want to
12 thank you Commissioner you know for your time today.
13 I can appreciate the complexity of the work that you
14 do and you know no dollar amount is going to help
15 alleviate the conditions that you know the agency has
16 to deal with on a day to day basis. And so, you know
17 we're here you know to offer our partnership. To try
18 to ensure that you have all of the resources that you
19 need to be able to do your job effectively but to
20 also ensure that those dollars are helping improve
21 the conditions that you know allow for families to
22 come in contact with you know any of those services.

23 So, thank you today for your testimony and I look
24 forward to visiting soon.

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2 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Deputy Speaker. I
3 just want to thank you so much for your partnership.
4 First Deputy Saunders spoke earlier about your visit
5 to detention and it goes for that, our staff as she
6 said are not only still talking about it but that you
7 really inspired them with your connection to this
8 work and certainly inspired me and just appreciate
9 all the support and your advocacy for us to move
10 upstream and we look forward to continuing to partner
11 with you.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Commissioner.
14 Thank you to your whole team. Nothing more important
15 than our kids and their interest to our city and the
16 workers that we entrust with their care. So, we want
17 to be partners with you on all this work and any
18 outstanding issues or questions we had today, we'll
19 put it in a letter, so hopefully we can get answers
20 back ASAP because it just helps in our budget
21 response and budget negotiations.

22 So, I thank you all very much and with that, I
23 will adjourn this hearing. Thank you. [GAVEL].

24 JESS DANNHAUSER: Thank you Chair Brannan.
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 July 11, 2022