Committee on General Welfare

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**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**COMMITTEEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION**

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**COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE**

**Hon. Diana Ayala, Chair**

**March 16, 2023**

**PROPOSED INTRODUCTION NO. 124-A:** By Council Members Salamanca, Jr., Stevens, Restler, Ayala, Sanchez, and Louis

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on and training of housing specialists within the human resources administration and department of homeless services

**PROPOSED INTRODUCTION NO. 431-A:** Council Members Salamanca, Jr., Hanif, Louis, Krishnan, Ayala, Lee, and Sanchez

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to customer service training for shelter personnel of the department of homeless services and its contractors

**PROPOSED INTRODUCTION NO. 642-A:** Council Members Williams, Restler, Hanif, Won, Nurse, Gutiérrez, Sanchez, Louis, Cabán, Menin, Brooks-Powers, Abreu, Ossé, Krishnan, Brannan, Hudson Riley, Lee, Velázquez, Schulman, Narcisse, Barron and Marte

**TITLE:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring quarterly reporting on the amount of time children and youth spend in the children’s center and other temporary placement facilities of the administration for children’s services

1. **Introduction**

On March 16, 2023, the Committee on General Welfare, chaired by Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, will consider Proposed Introduction Number (Int. No.) 124-A and Proposed Int. No. 431-A, both sponsored by Council Member Salamanca, Jr., and Proposed Int. No. 642-A, sponsored by Council Member Williams. The Committee previously held a hearing on Proposed Int. No. 124-A and Proposed Int. No. 431-A on September 13, 2022. At that hearing, the Committee heard testimony from the New York City Department of Social Services, community-based organizations, service providers, individuals who have formerly experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness, and members of the public. The Committee previously held a hearing on Proposed Int. No. 642-A on October 13, 2022. At that hearing, the Committee heard testimony from the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, community-based organizations, service providers, and members of the public.

1. **Bill Analysis**

**Proposed Int. No. 124-A**

This bill would require the Human Resources Administration (HRA) to designate housing specialists within all temporary shelters and to submit an annual report on the performance of such housing specialists. This bill would also require the Commissioner of Social Services to establish a training program for housing specialists and develop criteria to assess the performance of such housing specialists in matching eligible homeless persons with available housing resources as expeditiously as possible. The bill would also amend the existing requirements for housing specialists in Department of Homeless Services (DHS) transitional housing facilities and require DHS to submit an annual report to the Speaker and post on its website regarding such housing specialists.

Since being heard, this bill was amended to require the Commissioner of Social services to take into account the special needs of the relevant population when developing its performance assessment criteria for housing specialists in HRA shelters. This bill also received technical edits.

**Proposed Int. No. 431-A**

This bill would require biannual customer service training for all shelter personnel who have direct contact with shelter residents. Such training would include techniques to improve professionalism, increase cultural sensitivity, implement a trauma-informed approach to interactions with shelter residents, and de-escalate conflict.

Since introduction, this bill was amended to require DHS to develop and provide the required training to shelter personnel unless provided otherwise by contract. This bill also received technical edits.

**Proposed Int. No. 642-A**

This bill would require the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) to submit to the Mayor and the Speaker of the Council, and post on the ACS website, a quarterly report regarding the amount of time that children spend in the children’s center, youth reception centers, rapid intervention centers or other temporary placement facilities of ACS. Such report would include information about the number of children placed in such facilities, the length of stay and age ranges of such children, and the number of such children placed in a facility for the first time.

Since introduction, this bill was amended to require that the data reported be provided in a table format with specific rows and columns. This bill was further amended to require report submission by March 31, 2024 annually, instead of April 30, 2022. This bill also received technical edits. This bill would take effect immediately.

Proposed Int. No. 124-A

By Council Members Salamanca, Stevens, Restler, Ayala, Sanchez and Louis

A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on and training of housing specialists within the human resources administration and department of homeless services

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-151 to read as follows:

§ 21-151 Training and supervision of housing specialists. a. Definitions.  For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Domestic violence emergency shelter. The term “domestic violence emergency shelter” means time-limited housing for domestic violence survivors managed by the department or a provider under a contract or similar agreement with the department and subject to section 459-b of the social services law.

Domestic violence tier II shelter. The term “domestic violence tier II shelter” means housing for domestic violence survivors managed by the department or a provider under a contract or similar agreement with the department and subject to the provisions of part 453 of title 18 of the New York codes, rules, and regulations.

HIV/AIDS Services Administration (“HASA”) shelter. The term “HASA shelter” means single room occupancy hotels or congregate facilities that are managed by the department or a provider under contract or similar agreement with the department and assist individuals living with AIDS or HIV illness.

Housing specialist. The term “housing specialist” means a case manager or other staff of the department, or of a provider under contract or similar agreement with the department, assigned to work in domestic violence emergency shelters, domestic violence tier II shelters, or HASA shelters to help clients in such shelters secure appropriate housing.

Temporary shelter. The term “temporary shelter” means domestic violence emergency shelters, domestic violence tier II shelters, and HASA shelters managed by the department or a provider under contract or similar agreement with the department.

b. Training and supervision of housing specialists. The department shall designate housing specialists to serve in temporary shelters. The commissioner shall establish a training program for housing specialists employed by providers under contract or similar agreement with the department that shall include, but not be limited to, establishing expertise in the various housing programs to which eligible homeless clients may be referred and proper case management techniques. The commissioner shall develop specific criteria to assess the performance of housing specialists in matching, as expeditiously as possible, eligible homeless persons with available housing resources. To the extent such criteria relate to timetables for clients moving out of a shelter system, such criteria shall take into account the special needs of the relevant population with respect to living independently.

c. Reporting on housing specialists. No later than January 15, 2024, and no later than January 15 annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council and post on its website an annual report regarding information on housing specialists. Such report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the number of temporary shelters, disaggregated by district and type of shelter; (ii) the number of housing specialists within temporary shelters, disaggregated by district and type of shelter; (iii) the average caseload of housing specialists within each temporary shelter; and (iv) the criteria by which the commissioner shall assess the performance of housing specialists. No information that is required to be reported pursuant to this section shall be reported if doing so would violate any applicable provision of federal, state, or local law relating to the privacy, confidentiality, use, or disclosure of that information, or if there are fewer than 5 data points in the reporting cohorts. If there are fewer than 5 data points, the report shall designate this with an asterisk in place of the data point.

§ 2. Section 21-303 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as amended by local law number 75 for the year 1995, is amended to read as follows:

§ 21-303 Training and supervision of housing specialists. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Housing specialist. The term “housing specialist” means a case manager or other staff of the department, or of a provider under contract or similar agreement with the department, assigned to work in transitional housing facilities in order to help clients in such facilities secure appropriate housing.

Transitional housing facility. The term “transitional housing facility” means a shelter placement for families with children, adult families, single adults, or veterans managed by the department or a provider under contract or similar agreement with the department.

b. Training and supervision of housing specialists. The department shall designate [Housing] housing specialists [shall be available] to serve in each transitional housing facility [used, owned, operated, managed or contracted for, by or on behalf of the department]. Where housing specialists are placed in transitional housing facilities and are employed by not-for-profit or for-profit operators of such facilities, the commissioner shall establish a training program for such housing specialists which shall include, but not be limited to, establishing expertise in the various housing programs to which eligible homeless persons may be referred and proper case management techniques. The commissioner shall develop definite program goals and timetables by which [he or she] the commissioner shall assess the performance of housing specialists in matching as expeditiously as possible eligible homeless persons with available housing resources [and, on or before December 31, 1995, shall report to the speaker of the city council in writing on such goals and timetables by which he or she shall assess the performance of housing specialists].

c. Reporting on housing specialists. No later than January 15, 2024, and no later than January 15 annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council and post on its website a report regarding information on housing specialists. Such report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the number of transitional housing facilities, disaggregated by district and type of transitional housing facility; (ii) the number of housing specialists within all transitional housing facilities, disaggregated by district and type of transitional housing facility; (iii) the average caseload of housing specialists within each transitional housing facility; and (iv) the goals and timetables by which the commissioner shall assess the performance of housing specialists. No information that is required to be reported pursuant to this section shall be reported if doing so would violate any applicable provision of federal, state, or local law relating to the privacy, confidentiality, use, or disclosure of that information, or if there are fewer than 5 data points in the reporting cohorts. If there are fewer than 5 data points, the report shall designate this with an asterisk in place of the data point.

§ 3. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

Session 12

NAW/DR

LS #1221

3/8/23 6:45pm

Session 11

RQ/ACK

LS #6868

Intro. 1110-2018

Proposed Int. No. 431-A

By Council Members Salamanca, Hanif, Louis, Krishnan, Ayala, Lee and Sanchez

A LOCAL LAW

..Title

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to customer service training for shelter personnel of the department of homeless services and its contractors

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 3 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-331 to read as follows:

§ 21-331 Customer service training. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Provider. The term “provider” means a person under contract or similar agreement with the department to provide shelter.

Shelter. The term “shelter” means temporary emergency housing provided by the department or a provider to homeless adults, adult families, and families with children.

Shelter personnel. The term “shelter personnel” means employees of the department or a provider who have direct contact with shelter residents.

b. Unless provided otherwise by contract, the department shall develop and provide biannual training to shelter personnel on best practices for improving interactions between shelter personnel and shelter residents. Such training shall include techniques to improve professionalism, increase cultural sensitivity, implement a trauma-informed approach to interactions with shelter residents, and de-escalate conflict.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

Session 12

RCC/DR

Int. # 883

3/8/2023 7:24pm

Session 11

SW/AV/ACK

LS #11323

Int 1748/2017

11/29/2017

Proposed Int. No. 642-A

By Council Members Williams, Restler, Hanif, Won, Nurse, Gutiérrez, Sanchez, Louis, Cabán, Menin, Brooks-Powers, Abreu, Ossé, Krishnan, Brannan, Hudson Riley, Lee, Velázquez, Schulman, Narcisse, Barron and Marte

..Title

A Local Law

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring quarterly reporting on the amount of time children and youth spend in the children’s center and other temporary placement facilities of the administration for children’s services

..Body

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 9 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-923 to read as follows:

§ 21-923 Reporting on length of stay of children and youth in ACS facilities. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Age range. The term “age range” refers to a breakdown by the following categories: 6 years or less; 7-12 years; 13-17 years; and 18-20 years.

Children’s center. The term “children’s center” means the Nicholas Scoppetta children’s center or a successor center operated by ACS for the purpose of providing short-term care and maintenance therein for children or youth under ACS’s care.

Length of stay. The term “length of stay” refers to a breakdown by the following categories: 3 days or less; 4-7 days; 8-10 days; 11-20 days; 21-30 days; 31-60 days; 61-120 days; 121-180 days; and 181 or more days.

Rapid intervention center. The term “rapid intervention center” means a facility that provides intensive, structured, clinically-focused, therapeutic programming designed to provide stabilization and short-term, intensive treatment interventions to youth in a residential setting so that they may be returned to their parents, foster parents, or least-restrictive level of care as promptly as possible.

Temporary placement facility. The term “temporary placement facility” means a facility for children or youth under the care of ACS who await a longer-term placement.

Youth reception center. The term “youth reception center” means a short-term, pre-placement facility for children or youth under the care of ACS who await placement with an appropriate foster care provider.

b. No later than March 31, 2024, and quarterly thereafter, ACS shall submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council, and shall post conspicuously on the ACS website, a report containing the following information, disaggregated by age range and length of stay, for the children’s center, youth reception centers, rapid intervention centers, and any other temporary placement facilities for the immediately preceding quarter:

1. The number of children or youth residing in such facility; and

2. The number of such children or youth who were placed in such facility for the first time.

c. The report required pursuant to subdivision b shall be presented as a table where each row represents 1 of the following: (i) the children’s center; (ii) youth reception centers; (iii) rapid intervention centers; and (iv) other temporary placement facilities. The columns in such table shall include the number of children or youth residing in the applicable facility, the number of such children or youth in each age range, the number of such children or youth in each category of length of stay, and the number of such children or youth placed in such facility for the first time.

d. No report required by this section shall contain personally identifiable information. If a category contains between 1 and 5 children or youth, or contains a number that would allow the identity of a child or youth in another category that contains between 1 and 5 children or youth to be deduced, the number shall be replaced with a symbol. A category that contains zero shall be reported as zero, unless such reporting would violate any applicable provision of federal, state, or local law relating to the privacy of children’s information. Reports submitted pursuant to this section shall be made in accordance with all applicable provisions of federal, state, and local laws relating to the privacy of information and confidentiality of records.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

Session 12

JTB/ACK

LS #8694

3/8/2023 7:00pm

Session 11

JG

LS #17511

Int 2419