

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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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  
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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May 10, 2024  
Start: 9:40 a.m.  
Recess: 3:45 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan, Co-Chairperson  
Althea V. Stevens, Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Gale A. Brewer  
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers  
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Francisco P. Moya  
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COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND  
YOUTH:

Rita C. Joseph  
Julie Menin  
Nantasha M. Williams

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Jess Dannhauser, Commissioner of the  
Administration for Children Services

Margaret Pletnikoff, Deputy Commissioner of the  
Administration for Children Services

Winette Saunders, First Deputy Commissioner of  
the Administration for Children Services

Keith Howard, Commissioner of the Department of  
Youth and Community Development

Alan Cheng, First Deputy Commissioner of the  
Department of Youth and Community Development

Nevita Bailey, Chief Financial Officer of the  
Department of Youth and Community Development

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Youth and Community Development

Alan Cheng, First Deputy Commissioner of the  
Department of Youth and Community Development

Nevita Bailey, Chief Financial Officer of the  
Department of Youth and Community Development

Darryl Rattray, Associate Commissioner of Youth  
Services and Strategic Partnerships of the  
Department of Youth and Community Development

Daphne Montanez, Deputy Commissioner Workforce  
Connect of the Department of Youth and Community  
Development

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

Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner Youth Services of the Department of Youth and Community Development

Dana Cantelmi, Chief Contracting Officer of the Department of Youth and Community Development

Julie Breitman, Assistant Commissioner Workforce Programs of the Department of Youth and Community Development

Mike Bobbitt, Deputy Commissioner for Community Development of the Department of Youth and Community Development

Rong Zhang, Associate Commissioner for Community Action of the Department of Youth and Community Development

Dante Bravo, Senior Policy Analyst at Children's Aid

Lauren Galloway, Advocacy Coordinator at the Coalition for Homeless Youth

Caitlyn Passaretti, Policy and Advocacy Associate with the Citizens Committee for Children of New York

Nora Moran, Director of Policy and Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses

Michelle Fields, Co-Supervising Attorney of the Community Justice Unit

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

Jonée Billy, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs at PowerPlay, and representing Sports Training and Role Models for Success Citywide Girls Initiative

Erica Silberman, Director of Engagement and Partnerships at Girls Write Now

Lisbett Rodriguez, Programs and Systems Senior Coordinator at Girls Write Now

Raquea Hemingway, Director of Student and Family Engagement at Figure Skating in Harlem

Francesca Perrone, Hispanic Federation

Steven Morales, New York Policy Director at All Our Kin

Shawn Jean-Louis, Policy Director at ExpandedED Schools

Nadia Swanson, Director of Technical Assistance and Advocacy at the Ali Forney Center

Sebastien Vonte, Associate Vice President of Street Work Programs at Safe Horizon

Ramon LeClerc, New Alternatives for Homeless LGBTQ Youth

Scott Daly, Senior Director of New York Junior Tennis and Learning's free tennis programs

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

Annie Minguez, Vice President of Government and  
Community Relations for Good Shepherd Services

Tené Howard, Executive Director at Sadie Nash  
Leadership Project

Roslyn Morrison, Senior Attorney at the Legal Aid  
Society in the Community Justice Unit

Edwin Santana, Community Organizer at Freedom  
Agenda

Diana Imbert, Staff Attorney for the Early  
Childhood Education Project at Advocates for  
Children of New York

Sierra Kraft, Executive Director of Immigrant  
Children Advocates' Relief Effort

Lisa Crook, Chief Program Officer at Covenant  
House New York

Denise Taylor, Program Director at Brooklyn  
Transitions Family Treatment Rehabilitation  
Program with Good Shepherd Services

Gabby Cadahia, Development Officer at New York  
Edge

Alex Malescio, Senior Director of Government  
Relations at Urban Upbound, AKA East River  
Development Alliance

Peter Tarson (phonetic)

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 check for the Committee on Finance joint with  
4 Children and Youth Services recorded by Layla Lynch  
5 in the Council Chambers on May 10, 2024.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and  
7 welcome to the New York City Council Executive Budget  
8 Hearing on the Committee on Finance jointly with  
9 Youth and Children's Services.

10 At this time, can everybody please  
11 silence your cell phones.

12 If you wish to testify, please go up to  
13 the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk to fill out a testimony  
14 slip.

15 Written testimony can be emailed to  
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is  
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

18 At this time and going forward, no one is  
19 to approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach  
20 the dais.

21 Thank you for your cooperation.

22 Chairs, we are ready to begin.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,  
24 Sergeant. [GAVEL] Okay, good morning and welcome to  
25 day five of the FY25 Executive Budget Hearings. I'm

Council Member Justin Brannan. I Chair the Committee  
on Finance.

Today's hearing will begin with the  
Administration for Children's Services followed later  
by the Department of Youth and Community Development,  
and I'm pleased to be joined by my good friend and  
Colleague and Chair of the Committee on Children and  
Youth, Council Member Althea Stevens. We've been  
joined this morning by Council Member Cabán.

I want to welcome Commissioner Dannhauser  
and your team. Thank you for joining us today to  
answer our questions.

Just to set the table, on April 24, 2024,  
the Administration released the Executive Financial  
Plan for FY24 to 28 with a proposed FY25 budget of  
111.6 billion dollars. ACS' proposed FY25 budget of  
2.73 billion represents 2.4 percent of the  
Administration's proposed FY25 budget in the  
Executive Plan. This is an increase of 16.6 million  
dollars, or 0.6 percent, from the 2.71 billion that  
was originally budgeted in the FY25 Preliminary Plan.  
The increase is mostly the result from cost-of-living  
adjustments for workers at human service non-profits.  
As of March 2024, ACS has 653 vacancies relative to

1  
2 their budgeted headcount in FY24. My questions today  
3 will largely focus on new needs in foster care  
4 funding, PEGs to preventative programs, and the  
5 Childcare Voucher fiscal cliff. In its response to  
6 the Preliminary Budget, the Council called on the  
7 Administration to add 25 million dollars for Promise  
8 NYC Childcare Voucher Program for undocumented  
9 families along with taking action on childcare  
10 vouchers overall as well as foster care payments. The  
11 Administration included no money for any of these  
12 items in the Executive Budget despite the fact that  
13 there's almost 1 billion dollars in resources that  
14 the Council has identified in our budget response  
15 that the Mayor's Executive Budget continues to  
16 ignore. We have the resources to restore and invest  
17 in key services like childcare this year, while still  
18 protecting against risks and under-budgeted costs,  
19 and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses  
20 today on these topics. Now I want to turn to my co-  
21 Chair for this hearing, Council Member Stevens, for  
22 her opening statement.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning. I'm  
24 Council Member Althea Stevens, Chair on the Committee  
25 of Children and Youth Services. Today's joint hearing



1 with the Committee on Finance will be on the Fiscal  
2 2025 Executive Budget for the Administration for  
3 Children's Services, or ACS. Thank you to my good  
4 friend and Finance Chair, Chair Brannan, for joining  
5 us and having partnership through this budget process  
6 during this hearing.

7  
8 I would like to thank Commissioner Jess  
9 Dannhauser for joining us as well as the entire team  
10 for ACS.

11 ACS' Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget is 2.7  
12 billion dollars. The Executive Plan includes  
13 increased investments in childcare and foster care,  
14 but does not restore cuts, including in the November  
15 plan, for programs such as Close to Home and  
16 preventative services. I'm very happy to see that the  
17 City added funding for COLA for contracted human  
18 services providers who provide City services, which  
19 has been a top priority for me since I got into  
20 Council, but the Council is very disappointed to see  
21 that one of our key budget response priorities,  
22 Promise NYC, was not included in the Executive Plan.  
23 I look forward to today's discussion and budget  
24 actions including in the Executive Plan and the  
25 impacts of the PEGs from both the November and

1 Preliminary Plans. Vital ACS programs such as foster  
2 care, Close to Homes, preventative services, and  
3 foster care. I'm particularly interested in hearing  
4 how ACS is strategizing to meet the multi-facing  
5 needs of at-risk families across the city, working to  
6 increase the utilization and preventative services  
7 that ensure the health, safety, and stability of  
8 families and children.  
9

10 I would like to thank both my Staff and  
11 Committee Staff for helping prepare for today's  
12 hearing, Saiyemul Hamid, Finance Analyst; Julia, Unit  
13 Head; Christina, Legislative Counsel; Elizabeth Arzt,  
14 Policy Analyst; and my Chief-of-Staff, Lamont, and  
15 the entire A-Team back at the District Office.

16 I will turn it back over now to Chair  
17 Brannan to, yeah, that's it.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair  
19 Stevens.

20 Before we get started, I also want to  
21 take a moment to thank the entire Council Finance  
22 Division for this first week of Executive Budget  
23 Hearings. There's a ton of people who work super hard  
24 behind the scenes, crunching numbers back at Mission  
25 Control to make these hearings run smoothly, today

1  
2 especially to Julia Haramis and Saiyemul Hamid, and  
3 Committee Counsel Mike Twomey who's been here with me  
4 every day, my Senior Advisor John Yedin, and  
5 everybody else.

6           Just as a reminder, for this year's  
7 Executive Budget Hearings, we'll take public  
8 testimony today, on the day of the hearing, after all  
9 the agency witnesses have finished instead of holding  
10 one day of public testimony at the end so, if you're  
11 here today or you're watching on Zoom, you wish to  
12 speak on the ACS or the DYCD FY25 Executive Budget,  
13 make sure you fill out a witness slip with the  
14 Sergeant-at-Arms so you can testify later on.

15           I'll now turn it over to Committee  
16 Counsel Mike Twomey to swear in the witnesses and  
17 also note that we've been joined on Zoom by Council  
18 Member Moya.

19           COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Good morning.  
20 Raise your right hands, please.

21           Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
22 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
23 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
24 questions? Jess Danhauser.

25           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I do.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Winette  
3 Saunders.

4 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAUNDERS: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Margaret  
6 Pletnikoff.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PLETNIKOFF: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Thank you. You  
9 may begin.

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Good morning,  
11 Chair Stevens, Chair Brannan, and Members of the  
12 Committee on Children and Youth, and Members of the  
13 Finance Committee. I'm Jess Dannhauser, the  
14 Commissioner of the Administration for Children's  
15 Services. I'm pleased to be joined at today's hearing  
16 on our Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget by Winette  
17 Saunders, our First Deputy Commissioner, and Margaret  
18 Pletnikoff, the Deputy Commissioner for Finance.

19 Throughout our work in child welfare,  
20 juvenile justice, childcare assistance, and  
21 supporting the well-being of communities, we remain  
22 committed to helping build a New York City that is  
23 more safe, just, and equitable for New York City's  
24 children and families. I look forward to sharing our  
25 progress with you and eager to continue partnering on

1  
2 our ongoing efforts to deepen our work in the coming  
3 year.

4           At ACS, we take our responsibility to  
5 keep children safe very seriously. We believe that  
6 essential to keeping children safe and families  
7 strong is working to provide families and communities  
8 with access to the sports they need to thrive. This  
9 is the work we do each and every day throughout our  
10 continuum and the work of our dedicated providers and  
11 their staff. Affordable childcare is critical. It  
12 allows parents to work or pursue training, knowing  
13 their children are cared for in a setting that  
14 supports their healthy development. We have continued  
15 to increase access to childcare assistance. There are  
16 now over 37,000 children enrolled in childcare with a  
17 low-income voucher, helping offset costs to the  
18 family, a 105 percent increase from this time last  
19 year. We've also worked hard to ensure families in  
20 the highest-need neighborhoods can access affordable  
21 care. We've seen a 582 percent increase in enrollment  
22 with low-income vouchers from the 17 high-need  
23 community districts since June of 2022. We've also  
24 continued to support families and communities by  
25 investing in 11 community partnerships, and now 12

1 open Family Enrichment Centers, with eight more FECs  
2 already working with their communities to open new  
3 sites over the coming Fiscal Year. We have deepened  
4 our efforts to build awareness among parents,  
5 caregivers, and child-serving professionals about how  
6 to prevent unintentional child injuries, including by  
7 promoting infant-safe sleep practices, medication  
8 safety, and safe storage of cannabis-infused edibles.  
9 May is Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Month so we're  
10 working to ensure New Yorkers know that supporting  
11 parental health and well-being is a critical part of  
12 keeping children safe and preventing injuries like  
13 Shaken Baby Syndrome.

14  
15 We're also continuing to strengthen our  
16 work to promote family-driven solutions to keep  
17 children safe. We've increased CARES, our non-  
18 investigatory child protection response, so that now  
19 25 percent of incoming reports receive this  
20 alternative approach that includes an assessment of  
21 child safety and, importantly, empowers the family to  
22 identify needed supports for themselves and their  
23 children. In addition, after a successful pilot, we  
24 are now nearly citywide with providing a translated  
25 notification to better help parents understand their

1 rights at the outset of a child protective  
2 investigation. To date, we have trained over 1,100  
3 staff and anticipate all child protection staff will  
4 be trained by Memorial Day.  
5

6 As a parent, I know that raising a child  
7 is enormously rewarding and can also be challenging.  
8 Along with our new Acting Deputy Commissioner for  
9 Prevention Services, Luisa Linares, we are focused on  
10 getting the word out so the families who are in know  
11 how to access our continuum of prevention services.

12 April was Child Abuse Prevention Month,  
13 so we used that opportunity to collaborate with our  
14 prevention provider partners through social media, a  
15 gathering at City Hall, and press coverage to spread  
16 the word about the free, voluntary services we  
17 provide to families, regardless of immigration  
18 status, all across the city. Information about these  
19 services can be found on our website,  
20 [www.nyc.gov/for-families](http://www.nyc.gov/for-families), and through calling our  
21 prevention hotline at 212-676-7667.

22 Our goal to increase the number of  
23 families receiving services without the need for a  
24 child welfare investigation is resulting in promising  
25 outcomes. In the first three months of this year, we

1 received more than twice as many referrals to  
2 prevention services from community sources than in  
3 the first three months of 2023. This means schools,  
4 hospitals, NYCHA, shelters, and families themselves  
5 are learning how to access supportive family services  
6 without any involvement from child protection.  
7  
8 Meanwhile, our new school-based early support program  
9 contracts go into effect in July.

10           While the number of children in foster  
11 care has continued to decrease to historic lows, we  
12 are also working with our providers to strengthen  
13 services and supports for children in foster care,  
14 their parents, and their foster parents. We continue  
15 to emphasize kinship placements where children are  
16 placed with relatives and close family friends.  
17 Today, approximately half of the children entering  
18 foster care are placed with kin. In addition, as part  
19 of our new foster care contracts, new foster parents  
20 are trained in the Trauma Responsive Informed  
21 Parenting Program, TRIPP, and 60 percent of these  
22 foster parents were trained as of May 1, 2024. In  
23 addition, over 4,000 New York City young people  
24 between the ages of 11 and 26, including 524 over the  
25 age of 21, and 167 justice-involved youth are



1 receiving Fair Futures coaching and our tutoring.

2 We're also seeing tremendous success with our College

3 Choice program, which was launched in 2022 and

4 provides youth in or leaving foster care with support

5 for college, including tuition, housing assistance,

6 coaching, and a 60-dollar-a-day stipend. When the

7 program was launched in 2022, there were less than

8 200 youth participating. Today, it is almost double,

9 with over 300 youth participating in College Choice.

10 We are eagerly planning for the upcoming

11 summer. As in past summers, ACS collaborates with

12 DYCD to enroll youth involved with ACS in paid summer

13 internships through the Emerging Summer Youth

14 Employment Program, a six-week program that emerges

15 youth in supervised project-based learning and work

16 experience. Thanks to the commitment of our foster

17 care providers and Fair Futures coaches, not that

18 it's a competition, but ACS leads all City agencies

19 with over 1,200 applications so far. ACS also offers

20 our Commissioner's College Internship Program, where

21 40 college-age youth participate in an 11-week

22 internship at ACS, paying up to 6,700 dollars for

23 undergraduate students and 9,500 dollars for graduate

24 students to intern at ACS work sites. Finally, this

1  
2 summer, ACS is collaborating with iFoster to create  
3 ACS work sites for six AmeriCorps volunteer  
4 internships.

5           We're also strengthening supports and  
6 programming for justice-involved youth. Launched this  
7 past July, our new alternative detention contracts  
8 have served over 120 youth in the first six months,  
9 and we're currently developing a pilot program to  
10 serve older youth with cases in the youth part of  
11 Supreme Court.

12           We recently announced the recommended  
13 awards for our new Close to Home contracts, which  
14 will strengthen the Close to Home system of care by  
15 right-sizing the system while allocating additional  
16 resources for the provider agencies to enhance  
17 services for the young people in their care. The new  
18 contract budgets were increased to fund specific  
19 lines to help improve the overall programming and  
20 offer a more robust treatment approach. These new  
21 lines now include funding for a Fair Futures staff,  
22 aftercare staff, a recreational specialist, an intake  
23 coordinator, and a mental health team, all while  
24 reducing the staffing ratio to three-to-one and  
25 increasing staff salaries.

1  
2           Tutoring and workforce development will  
3 also be expanded to youth in Close to Home.  
4 Vocational training is underway in secured detention,  
5 and our tutors have enhanced the academic successes  
6 of our young people. Our young people across the  
7 continuum will be engaged in summer school and SYAP.

8           In June, we are looking forward to  
9 celebrating the graduations of our young people in  
10 secured detention, non-secured detention, and Close  
11 to Home.

12           ACS' Executive Budget for FY 2025 is 2.7  
13 billion, of which 843 million is City tax levy. The  
14 Executive Budget does not include any new reductions  
15 to ACS while including funding for foster care that  
16 will address the shortfall we currently have in our  
17 budget due to a reduction in federal funds. The  
18 Executive Budget also includes actions, realignment  
19 that move funds into appropriate budget codes, such  
20 as moving Fair Futures money for juvenile justice  
21 into the corresponding budget codes and adding in  
22 state and federal funding where applicable for  
23 various programs, such as adoption subsidy and the  
24 Nurse-Family Partnership and KinGAP.

1  
2 More programmatically, in the Executive  
3 Budget, there is a cost-neutral action where ACS is  
4 moving 27 staff and the corresponding funding from  
5 the Family Service Unit, which conducts court-ordered  
6 supervision, to the Family Preservation Program,  
7 which is an intensive prevention program aimed at  
8 addressing high-needs families while preventing court  
9 filings under foster care. Finally, our budget  
10 includes funding for both Workforce Enhancements and  
11 the Human Service Provider COLA, which will both help  
12 to strengthen the work of our providers and increase  
13 the wages of their hard-working staff.

14 ACS remains committed to a New York City  
15 where children and young people are safe and thriving  
16 and where families are supported as their most  
17 important resources and protectors and where our  
18 staff and our provider staff are supported as they  
19 carry out their critical work. As Commissioner, I  
20 continue to be inspired and moved by the deep  
21 commitment and passion of the ACS team and our  
22 providers they have to our mission making New York  
23 City a better place for children and families. Thank  
24 you.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,  
Commissioner. We've also been joined by Council  
Members Restler, Williams, and Joseph.

I want to dive right into the new need  
for foster care funding. The Executive Plan includes  
129 million dollars funding swap of federal funds  
with city funds for foster care in FY24. Could you  
tell us why that swap needed to be made?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes. For years  
now, the federal reimbursement through Title IV-E has  
been declining. They still have an ancient  
eligibility criteria that dates back to a 1996  
standard, and so the percentage of young people who  
are eligible for IV-E funding has been declining over  
the years.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, and how  
will funding be utilized? What programs does it  
relate to?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It supports the  
whole of the foster care budget so everything from  
foster parent rates to services to young people to  
Fair Futures. It supports the whole 800-plus million  
dollars.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So was there a  
3 discussion around baselining that adjustment because  
4 I see it was only made for one year?

5 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We're in  
6 conversations with OMB. The other challenge that we  
7 have in our foster care budget is the state smartly  
8 increased rates a couple years ago but didn't  
9 commensurately impact the block grant so that's  
10 another place where we have a challenge, and we're  
11 working with OMB each year. We're projecting the  
12 number of young people we'll have in care, the type  
13 of care, and so we work with them throughout the year  
14 to look at the census and make sure the resources are  
15 there, but they've been clear with us that the  
16 resources will be there to continue the programs that  
17 we have.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is the current  
19 expenditure for foster care then outpacing the  
20 baseline budget?

21 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It is. Our  
22 projection for '24 currently is 841 million, and  
23 we're constantly working with OMB to look at where  
24 additional resources might be needed.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I'm assuming it  
3 would be helpful to have OMB have the budget more  
4 aligned with the current level of demand, right?

5 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: You know, it's a  
6 dynamic assessment. We're always looking at census  
7 projections. For years, the number of young people  
8 coming into care has lessened and, as we've invested  
9 in preventive services and done more work around  
10 family supports, they make sure that they move money  
11 into our budget to ensure cashflow that we can pay  
12 our providers. I wish it was a little bit easier to  
13 predict, but these things are pretty dynamic.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Are we spending  
15 more every year on foster care?

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes, we have  
17 been. The new contracts that went into place last  
18 July included a series of new investments. We're  
19 spending a lot more on things like Fair Futures,  
20 increased the rates for providers, for foster parents  
21 and now, obviously, there's going to be a state COLA  
22 coming for workforce so we are spending. If you  
23 compare it to years ago, we're spending a lot more  
24 per every young person to make sure they have what  
25 they need, the mental health resources that they

1 need, etc. so it has been increasing even though the  
2 census has been declining.

3  
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I want to talk  
5 about the PEGs so in the Preliminary Plan, there were  
6 reductions of the budget for preventative programs  
7 across the entire plan period from 2 million in FY25  
8 growing to 8 million in FY28. Could you tell us what  
9 programs and services were included in those PEGs?

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Sure. Over the  
11 course of the last 18 months or so, we've been  
12 looking at our utilization and preventive services to  
13 make sure that it is appropriately used. We were  
14 patient, because a lot of that had to do with COVID  
15 and workforce issues but, when we were looking at our  
16 deployment of resources, there was several programs  
17 that had very low utilization, 20, 25 percent  
18 utilization. We took those down in a series of PEGs.  
19 Most recently, we went through an exercise with  
20 providers to look at our family treatment and  
21 rehabilitation program. More across the board, there  
22 was utilization around 60 percent, and what we did  
23 with providers was walk through an exercise to create  
24 a new model budget. 128 is the program size for FTR.  
25 We created a new model budget for 96 to make sure



1 they could still meet their fixed costs, and it's a  
2 slightly higher per slot rate at 96 because we wanted  
3 to make sure that those programs stayed strong, and  
4 that was the most recent cut so we moved about half  
5 of the providers that provide FTR to the 96. If we  
6 see a demand, we have several thousand slots that are  
7 currently available. We'll work with OMB if we see an  
8 increase in demand. We're very pleased that over the  
9 past three months, we've seen a marked increase in  
10 the number of families coming to us through community  
11 referrals, about 20 percent, where previously it was  
12 about 10 percent, and that's a major goal for us, is  
13 to get to families sooner without a child protective  
14 investigation so we're pleased about that. We also  
15 think that this is incentive to make sure that those  
16 resources are used wisely, but we're constantly  
17 looking at each neighborhood to make sure that every  
18 neighborhood has services available, and they do.

19  
20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: The November plan  
21 also included a PEG, right?

22 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It did. That was  
23 also around the under-utilization programs, and we  
24 made the decision, Council Member, to really look at  
25 closing whole programs, even though that's harder. We

1 did not want to cut a little bit across the board and  
2 leave what remained weaker, and so we looked at  
3 programs that were significantly under-utilized.

4 Overall, we're also adding new slots in our new  
5 school-based early support program so, overall, we're  
6 going from about 12,700 to 11,500, and we're seeing  
7 the actual utilization of those move in the right  
8 direction but, again, we still have slots available.

9  
10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What sort of  
11 feedback has ACS heard from providers through the  
12 PEG? How many clients had to be shifted to different  
13 programs?

14 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Very few,  
15 because there was under-utilization in those  
16 programs, and we worked to maybe close out the  
17 services, if that was appropriate, if they were at  
18 that stage in their service, or transfer it to a  
19 nearby program. Obviously, the providers who we  
20 closed whole programs were disappointed. Generally, I  
21 think we got feedback that providers were pleased  
22 about our approach to FTR, that we didn't just sort  
23 of make a sweeping cut, that we sat down, we changed  
24 the budget structure, we made sure they had what they  
25 needed so it's never easy to share with a provider

1 that you're cutting a program but, generally, our  
2 providers are excellent. They're leaning into this  
3 community work, and we're grateful for them.

4  
5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I hear you  
6 mention under-utilization a bit. Are there currently  
7 any waitlists for any of the preventative programs?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: There are not.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: And we look  
11 neighborhood by neighborhood. There may be a program  
12 or two that is at 100 percent, but I can say with  
13 confidence that each neighborhood has preventative  
14 services available.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I want to  
16 talk about the Capital Commitment Plan and the  
17 Horizon Secure Detention Center. How were the  
18 adjustments made in the Executive Capital Plan  
19 determined in regard to the Capital Commitment Plan?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: So when we  
21 worked with OMB, we moved some out-year funding  
22 forward, and we have an urgent need to build more  
23 programming space at Horizon and more classroom  
24 space, more mental health space, cafeteria space. It  
25 also includes 48 additional beds, and so we've been

1 working with every partner we can. DDC has been  
2 really excellent. We've been meeting with the  
3 community, meeting with the Comptroller to move this  
4 plan forward.  
5

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the  
7 current capacity at Horizon?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The current  
9 capacity both across Crossroads and Horizon is 267. I  
10 believe Horizon is 134 of that.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And what would  
12 the capacity be after the upgrades are completed?

13 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It will include  
14 an additional 48 beds, so 185, if I did that right.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I just have  
16 a little bit on the childcare vouchers fiscal cliff.  
17 Do you believe it would be appropriate for the out-  
18 year funding for childcare to be more accurately  
19 aligned with the recent actual expenditures?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I think we are  
21 working to get there. We are still waiting for our  
22 state allocation, and so we've been working with OMB  
23 to make sure that there are resources in the FY24  
24 budget. We have a green light to continue to expand  
25 voucher enrollment. Really proud that we have moved

1 low-income voucher enrollment from 7,000 in 2022 to  
2 about 38,000 today. Our team has worked  
3 extraordinarily hard to really ramp up the  
4 eligibility processing. In '24, they added 311  
5 million in state and federal funds and 81 million in  
6 CTL funds so we're waiting for our state allocation,  
7 but we absolutely have a green light for this Fiscal  
8 Year to continue to expand voucher enrollment.  
9

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: In the Council's  
11 budget response, we called for the accurate  
12 baselining of childcare vouchers but, like many  
13 things, no additional funding was included in the  
14 Mayor's Executive Plan so are you joining us with  
15 pressing OMB to increase the childcare budget?

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I'm joining you  
17 in childcare is an urgent priority for this  
18 Administration demonstrated by our expansion, and  
19 we're absolutely working with OMB to make sure we  
20 have the exact right numbers for the year ahead. Like  
21 foster care, it's also dynamic, assessing the number  
22 of voucher enrollments and the type of voucher  
23 enrollment to make sure we're getting the analysis  
24 right, but we are full steam ahead on this.  
25

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the  
3 current number of childcare vouchers issued by ACS?

4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: There's 74,000  
5 childcare vouchers overall. About 45,000 of those,  
6 50,000 of those are ACS vouchers, either for child  
7 welfare-enrolled families or low-income vouchers, and  
8 about 38,000 are low-income vouchers.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How does that  
10 compare with totals in past years?

11 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We are way up.  
12 We were at 7,000 in 2022 of low-income vouchers, and  
13 now we're at 38,000. We're really, really grateful  
14 for our team's hard work.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: In 2022, you're  
16 at 7,000. In 2023, you're at 74,000?

17 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I'm sorry. This  
18 is just the low-income voucher so 7,000 to 38,000.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: 38,000.

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The overall  
21 vouchers, I believe it was somewhere between around  
22 40-some-odd to 74,000 so that's been way up as well,  
23 but the bulk of the growth has been in that low-  
24 income voucher category.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is there a  
waitlist for vouchers?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: There's not.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I think that's  
all I've got. Okay. Thank you very much,  
Commissioner.

I'm going to hand it over to Chair  
Stevens.

Just quickly, we've been joined by  
Council Members Louis, Brooks-Powers, and Sanchez on  
Zoom. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you, Chair  
Brannan.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you, and  
good morning.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Good morning.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm going to jump  
right in. Foster care and other adjustments. The  
Executive Plan included a few adjustments for foster  
care. There were 16.4 million in the unspent state  
funds rolled from Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2024, and  
35.7 million in state and federal funds added in  
Fiscal 2024 only. Can you walk us through those  
changes and how were those funds amount determined?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Sure. This is mostly swapping so I'm going to ask Margaret to take this.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PLETNIKOFF: Sure, so over the course of the year, we had added in January 118 CTL, and then through our evaluation of our additional needs, we added another 52 million, as you mentioned, and then we had the 129 million funding swap from federal to CTL because of the Title IV-E shortfall, and we did an additional... no, I think that's it.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Why was that only done in 2024?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PLETNIKOFF: Because, as the Commissioner mentioned, we're constantly evaluating the amount, the census, and the need, and looking at what we need in terms of federal and state funding and working closely with OMB.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The other variable there is we're looking at what the state invests in the block grant and then what eligibility rate we have for federal dollars, which, again, has been declining because it's still attached to a very old standard.



1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. How  
3 will those funds be utilized?

4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: They'll support  
5 the foster care program, as you know well, Chair  
6 Stevens, so it'll include support for foster parents,  
7 it includes stipends for young people, it includes  
8 furniture allowances, clothing allowances, it  
9 includes Fair Futures, all of the things that are  
10 needed to care for our children in foster care.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Does  
12 ACS anticipate similar adjustments will be needed in  
13 future plans? If so, are you considering adjustment  
14 at the baseline?

15 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We do expect  
16 that there will be a need for additional resources  
17 than what is in the baseline, and OMB has been  
18 supportive in working with us on that.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's good to  
20 hear. Okay, we'll move on to Close to Homes. During  
21 the recent oversight hearing, we had a Close to Homes  
22 hearing recently, ACS stated that they would be  
23 advocating for the restoration of the PEGs in the  
24 Executive Budget. The reasoning offered that the new  
25 RFP had right-sized the programming and eliminated

1 slots that were not utilized. Can you provide current  
2 slots utilized for Close to Home, and what is the  
3 budget for Close to Home program in Fiscal 2024-25  
4 and in the out-years?  
5

6 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The budget's  
7 about 110 million. We currently have 96 young people  
8 in Close to Home. The contracts that will begin on  
9 July 1st will have a capacity of 147. We initially  
10 RFP'd for 135. Given that the census had been  
11 increasing somewhat, we asked OMB to add an  
12 additional 12. They supported us in that, so we're at  
13 147. As you know, the Close to Home census,  
14 thankfully, has been low for many years. The City  
15 initially projected the need for about 300 beds so  
16 what we decided to do in this RFP was to right-size  
17 it and invest those resources into things like lower  
18 staffing ratios from six-to-one to three-to-one, Fair  
19 Futures coaches, mental health services so we wanted  
20 to put those resources back to work and have the  
21 right capacity. We are constantly assessing the  
22 census there and work with OMB if we need to create  
23 additional programs.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Just even  
25 thinking about that, and this is one of the things I

1 brought up in the hearing we had previously, is, one,  
2 talking to providers to right-size it and say, like,  
3 oh, the census go up, so we'll expand the program is  
4 really hard to do, as you know, because you can't  
5 just go online so quickly, and so if the demand  
6 increases beyond the current budget, what does that  
7 look like and how will we work with providers to get  
8 that online, and also just thinking about, and I've  
9 said this before, we're seeing the numbers increase  
10 in the secured detention centers, but we're seeing  
11 that we have under-utilization in Close to Home, so  
12 for me, again, I have to say, like, are we using all  
13 the toolkits and the tools in our tool basket to make  
14 sure that young people aren't going to secured  
15 detention if possible, and what does that look like  
16 so really want to just kind of hear what that plan  
17 is, and also thinking about how are we working with  
18 all systems to get young people in a place where  
19 they're not being sent to secured detention if they  
20 don't need to be.

22 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah, thank you  
23 for your consistent attention to this. On the matter  
24 of growing additional programs for Close to Home,  
25 you're right, it is not an overnight endeavor. That's

1 why we asked OMB to create the additional 12 slots.  
2 Limited secured placement is the hardest to bring  
3 back online from the Close to Home continuum so we  
4 expanded there, and we do have plenty of capacity  
5 there. Non-secure is also not easy, but a little bit  
6 easier. It's more group home-like living and doesn't  
7 have quite as many need for security, and so we look  
8 at this literally every day, and we think we're in  
9 the right place at the 147. We have lots of  
10 preventive services. We have our Juvenile Justice  
11 Initiative. The City did restore or add about 10  
12 million dollars to MOCJ for Alternatives to  
13 Incarceration to your point about secured detention  
14 to make sure that we're investing in young people.  
15 We've started to add Fair Futures to the front end of  
16 the justice system and, in addition, we're working  
17 with our new alternative detention providers to see  
18 if one or two of them will actually station  
19 themselves in the youth part, which is in criminal  
20 court, where most of the young people who are coming  
21 into secured detention have their cases, to see if  
22 there's ways in which we can add alternatives there  
23 so we are absolutely putting a full court press and  
24 getting as many services out there as we can.  
25

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, definitely.  
3 We definitely want to keep just pushing it in the  
4 forefront around what are we doing to prevent young  
5 people from going to secured detention because, when  
6 we're thinking about close Rikers Island and all  
7 those things, this is a decarceration plan, and it's  
8 really disheartening and disturbing to see the  
9 numbers continue to rise in our secured detention  
10 center, which for me is thinking about why do we not  
11 have a decarceration plan for young people and  
12 thinking about what does that look like and how are  
13 we making sure that all the services, so that they  
14 don't have to get to you.

15 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: If I can just  
16 add one thing? I absolutely agree with you, I just  
17 want to remind folks that one of the reasons the  
18 population is growing is because young people over 18  
19 stay with us now, right?

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's one of  
21 them.

22 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Right, and so...

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we can name  
24 it, but there's still a reason why we should be  
25 getting to them before.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: 100 percent. I  
just wanted to make sure that...

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I get it. I know  
you want to get it on record, but let's be clear,  
that's one indicator, and not the indicator, and so I  
think sometimes we try to throw that in there so it  
can be like, oh, raise the age, and that's not the  
only reason why young people should be getting there,  
and our goal should be to prevent them from ending up  
there so that's always going to be my stance.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: 100 percent.  
We're agreed.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: According to the  
terms and condition that ACS submitted on secured  
detention in the first half of Fiscal 2024, the  
average daily population in secured detention was  
233. I think you already kind of given us the  
breakdown of beds at Horizon and Crossroads. Now that  
we're nearing the end of the Fiscal Year, can you  
provide an update on the number of youth in secured  
and non-secured detention?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: This morning,  
there are 232 young people in secured detention. It's  
held pretty stable over the last couple months since

1 we last spoke about it. In non-secure, I believe the  
2 number is 43, but I will confirm that.

3  
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Are  
5 current staffing levels at Horizon and Crossroads  
6 sufficient?

7 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We are...

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And what's the  
9 vacancy rate?

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We are  
11 consistently hiring for our youth development  
12 specialists and our special officers. We've seen a  
13 significant increase in availability of both. I have  
14 the numbers here for you. It's over 500 active YDS,  
15 and that is up from a couple years ago where there  
16 was about 350 active YDS so we still have vacancies  
17 there. I believe it's about 75 vacancies, and we're  
18 continuing to hire. We have a graduation this  
19 afternoon. We also brought on far more special  
20 officers and cut their vacancy rate there  
21 dramatically.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think, even  
23 talking with some folks, we always want to think  
24 about the safety of young people, and one of the  
25 things we've definitely been hearing is just around

1  
2 young people not being able to go to school or get  
3 services because of the vacancy rates. Can you talk a  
4 little bit about why is that happening and what are  
5 we doing to kind of prevent that, to make sure that  
6 young people are getting to the services? I know even  
7 at Horizon, it was even being said that some of the  
8 kids were sleeping in classrooms. I know you're going  
9 to say that's not happening anymore, but that was one  
10 of the things that we were hearing so could you kind  
11 of just talk a little bit about that?

12 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Sure. We have  
13 about an 80 percent school attendance rate at  
14 Horizon. We've dedicated staff to be school liaisons  
15 specifically, and so their job is to make sure young  
16 people are getting up in the morning, that we have  
17 movement to school. We've been working with New York  
18 City Public Schools on a lot of new offerings, and  
19 we're going to have additional offerings coming in  
20 the coming Fiscal Year, including adult education,  
21 GED, that some of our young people would like to  
22 engage in. We're working with CUNY around additional  
23 college resources. We've had a number of graduations.  
24 We'd love for you to come out to them.

25



1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Invite me. I'll  
3 be there.

4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We want to make  
5 sure our young people are in school every day,  
6 getting the resources that they need, and we have  
7 seen a marked increase in their engagement in  
8 tutoring, and so we always have a long way to go  
9 there, but we are seeing some real progress.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Can you talk a  
11 little bit about the training of staff and what that  
12 looks like? Because I know you said all of the staff  
13 is trained on school liaison. What does that look  
14 like, and how are we training staff to properly work  
15 with these young people?

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah. Our youth  
17 development specialists and special officers are  
18 really incredible. These are folks who are working  
19 with young people. They do not have things like  
20 pepper spray. They're using their tools of de-  
21 escalation and working in relationship with young  
22 people. We're really grateful for them. They go  
23 through a six-week training course that includes both  
24 academy-style training, and then they do on-the-job  
25 training, come back to the academy, then we push in

1  
2 ongoing coaching. We work with national leaders in  
3 juvenile justice to help coach our staff, both our  
4 leadership and our staff, in the facilities. We do  
5 incident review with staff to learn about ways in  
6 which we can prevent incidents. I'm really pleased to  
7 share with you that our incidents, youth-on-youth  
8 assaults, youth-on-staff assaults, have decreased  
9 dramatically. We're down about 30 percent year over  
10 year.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just have some  
12 additional questions about programming. We've heard  
13 that young people and families, there's very little  
14 enrichment program available during the day for youth  
15 who are not enrolled in school and those in schools  
16 and after school on the weekend. For each secured  
17 detention center, Crossroads and Horizon, can you  
18 share with the Council a daily schedule of  
19 programming by residential hall?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Sure, we could  
21 work on providing that. Just to note, you'll see  
22 things like tutoring, sports and fitness, creative  
23 writing. There's a new music program at Crossroads.  
24 We have violence interrupters in the building, but we  
25

1  
2 can work on making sure you see how young people are  
3 engaged in services.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Definitely,  
5 please send that over.

6 How many hours per day and per week of  
7 programming does each organization provide?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I don't have  
9 that number offhand, but we can certainly work on it.  
10 We have contracts for workforce development that  
11 started this July, and so we're working with  
12 organizations who are coming into the building. We  
13 have the Cure Violence programs. I'll look and see  
14 what we can provide as far as the allocation between  
15 those kinds of providers.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, please send  
17 that over as well.

18 Have program hours been added or cut  
19 since the last Fiscal Year?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We've just been  
21 adding.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You've just been  
23 adding. How many young people attend at least four  
24 hours of enrichment program each week? You don't have  
25 that, you have to get back to me?

1  
2           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I would give you  
3 a high percentage on at least four hours a week, yes.

4           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. What's the  
5 average number of hours per week that each young  
6 person in the facility attends enrichment? You said  
7 you'll get back to me on that.

8           I have a couple of questions around the  
9 school. What is the school's attendance rate at each  
10 facility?

11           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It's about 80  
12 percent at Horizon and about 65 percent at  
13 Crossroads. Some of that, there's work we're doing  
14 around some kids who are not compulsory age who don't  
15 want to engage in school so that's why we're bringing  
16 in the adult GED. That's why we're bringing in the  
17 work around college and continuing to bring in  
18 workforce and vocational programming.

19           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Do the  
20 facility lockdowns prevent young people from  
21 attending school and enrichment programs?

22           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We very rarely  
23 are in that situation. Our kids regularly attend  
24 these programs.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But if there's a  
3 lockdown, does that prevent it?

4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: If there were to  
5 be, yes, but it's exceedingly rare.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Are young  
7 people 16 and under required to attend school?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They're required  
10 because we're hearing that some young people aren't  
11 going.

12 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Chair Stevens,  
13 as you know, I mean required and attending are  
14 definitely two different things.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, I know.

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Our staff work  
17 really hard to engage young people. A lot of them  
18 have been disengaged from school for a long time.  
19 Getting them to the classroom, sometimes we start  
20 with some tutoring. We'll meet them wherever they are  
21 and then get them into school and engage, and we  
22 really want to thank New York City Public Schools.  
23 The superintendent that runs Passages has been really  
24 attentive to the needs of young people and adjusting  
25 the programming.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What preliminary  
3 steps are being taken to ensure that young people are  
4 in the proper grade and educational appropriate  
5 classes? Because that was another thing that we were  
6 hearing that some people, young people are like kind  
7 of like all over the place, and I know it's like more  
8 individualized, but I'm hearing that they're still  
9 not getting proper.

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah, the  
11 schools do a full assessment. Some young people have  
12 individual education plans. Those still are important  
13 while they're in secure detention so the schools do  
14 those assessments and then cater to their particular  
15 needs.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. Given the  
17 expansion of Horizon and the considerable allocation  
18 of capital dollars ACS is dedicating to upgrading the  
19 facilities, we would like to get a better  
20 understanding on what measures ACS is taking to  
21 ensure our youth do not end up in secured detention  
22 facilities. What role is ACS play with youth legal  
23 proceedings?

24 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We don't play a  
25 role in court proceedings. Depending on whether it's

1 family court or the criminal court, there are  
2 different prosecutors. It's the district attorneys in  
3 the criminal court. It's corporation counsel in the  
4 family court. Our role is to make sure that young  
5 people have the services that they need. We have a  
6 robust set of services. We serve over 2,000 young  
7 people with FAP. We're really looking at family  
8 court. There are alternatives to detention, and our  
9 efforts of late have been really to try to grow older  
10 services because traditionally ACS has been focused  
11 on family court kids. Post Raise the Age, we have  
12 been additionally focused on older kids. We also call  
13 on the state to support us here. There have not been  
14 resources for Raise the Age...

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That sounds about  
17 right.

18 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: In services, and  
19 so we want to make sure that we have everything that  
20 we need. We're really grateful that in the Executive  
21 Budget, there's an additional 10 million dollars for  
22 alternatives to incarceration. Those programs are run  
23 by MOCJ but vitally important to the kids that we  
24 serve.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. We definitely need to call on the state to help and support and do their part as well.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Some of these questions, I feel like we touched on in the last hearing, but just thinking about in what cases is ACS able to recommend youth to be placed in preventative services rather than secured detention? Because I know like, although it's not necessarily your job, all those things, I'm sure you have influence and play a role in it so just trying to get a better understanding of what does that continuous partnership look like?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It's really about making sure that the services are available. In family court, we have our Juvenile Justice Initiative, which is an alternative to Close to Home. We have FAP, which is upfront. Anybody can access it without court involvement, and then we're growing the services that we have available in the criminal court, both with our partners at MOCJ and at ACS, and so, while we're not there to make a recommendation, we want to make sure we're there so that there's an



1 appropriate alternative when the judge believes  
2 that's the case. When young people are in our  
3 custody, we do a lot of work to make sure that the  
4 positive things that they're doing in our custody are  
5 known by the court so we submit information and  
6 reports about their progress and development, and  
7 that can have an influence on court decision-making  
8 but, ultimately, this is a judicial decision.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, absolutely,  
11 but we want to make sure we're pushing our partners  
12 any way we can.

13 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Indeed.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Advocates have  
15 flagged a concern to the Council regarding ACS'  
16 collection of disability benefits on behalf of  
17 children in foster care. We've heard that the funds  
18 collected are utilized for the overall foster care  
19 network rather than specific children. Can you verify  
20 if this is true, and why is that a practice?

21 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: It's not true.

22 In fact, we are one of the very few jurisdictions in  
23 the country, I believe three or four, that have  
24 endeavored to try to conserve benefits for young  
25 people, both Social Security, which is related to

1 disabilities, and RSDI, which is related to survivor  
2 benefits when children have unfortunately lost their  
3 parents. In July of 2022, we began the practice of  
4 conserving those benefits for young people. Previous  
5 to that, there was a different public policy, a  
6 public policy that's been upheld by the federal  
7 government, Supreme Court. Even though we are allowed  
8 to use disability benefits and survivor benefits  
9 towards the cost of care for children, we have  
10 developed this new approach to make sure that we  
11 maximize what young people can get. Several hundred  
12 young people have already received resources as a  
13 result of this upon their departure from care so that  
14 includes both disability benefits and survivor  
15 benefits.  
16

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Maybe you don't  
18 have this information currently, but for how many  
19 children does ACS collect disability benefits for  
20 currently, and how is this determined?

21 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Some young  
22 people come to us on those benefits. If a child loses  
23 their parents and comes into our care, they'll be  
24 eligible for those benefits, and some young people,  
25 the provider might notice a disability and there'll

1 be an application for those. Currently, we've created  
2 accounts and/or resources for 700 young people who  
3 are receiving disability benefits and 340 young  
4 people who are receiving survivor benefits. About  
5 half of those have actually received funds. The other  
6 half are still in care, and we're conserving the  
7 maximum amount of benefits for them, and they'll  
8 receive those funds upon discharge.

9  
10 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Approximately how  
11 many children have dual eligibility for disability  
12 benefits and survivor benefits?

13 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I don't have  
14 that answer. We can certainly get it to you. I think  
15 it's relatively low.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know that a lot  
17 of these questions, I know you guys have like been  
18 doing a really good job of trying to stop it, but are  
19 there any talks or works on thinking about how to get  
20 some of the money back for the young people who  
21 didn't get their benefits when this practice was  
22 implemented before?

23 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah. As you  
24 know, and thank you for your interest in this and our  
25 meetings on this. Previous to 2022, these monies were

1 collected and they were used to fund services for  
2 young people in foster care. They're part of the ACS  
3 budget. Those funds were spent. It was a different  
4 public policy context. You had a lot more kids in  
5 care and, as we've been able to reduce the number of  
6 young people in care, we've been investing at a much  
7 higher rate as we were discussing with Chair Brannan  
8 before, and so things like College Choice, things  
9 like Fair Futures were able to do at this moment.  
10 It's hard to go back and say, was that the right  
11 choice then? And should there be, you know, certainly  
12 an analysis that we can work on to see what might be  
13 appropriate there, but it certainly was a different  
14 public policy decision than where we are today where  
15 we're able to expand these resources with fewer kids  
16 in care.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, no, and I  
19 agree, and I think that you guys have been working  
20 really hard to kind of rectify some of these things  
21 from the past, and so I do appreciate that, but I do  
22 think we should definitely still be thinking about  
23 how do we make sure we right some of the wrongs,  
24 right, and, history has told itself that sometimes  
25 public policy isn't always the best policy, and so,

1 in thinking about the work that we're at and the  
2 place we are, we should also be thinking about how do  
3 we fix that? I know a Commissioner like you will put  
4 it together and will figure it out so definitely  
5 we'll continue having conversations regarding this  
6 because I know this is something that we've had a  
7 number of conversations about, and I've seen the  
8 dedication that you guys have been trying to  
9 methodically figure out how to do this in a really  
10 caring way, even thinking about some of the state  
11 stuff and working at it, so definitely looking  
12 forward to continue to build out a plan and also  
13 bringing some of our state colleagues into this  
14 conversation because it's a little bit more  
15 complicated than I think some folks actually  
16 understand, but thank you for that.

18 A critical component of ensuring that  
19 young people are receiving the proper care and  
20 assistance is the dedication of attention of ACS case  
21 workers and ACS contracted providers. The people on  
22 the frontline directly see the circumstances that  
23 young people are going through. What is ACS'  
24 caseload? What is the current caseload ratio for case  
25 workers?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Eight and a  
half.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the half?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: That's just the  
average. Some have eight, some have nine.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: There's a half?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: This is a number  
that is very low nationally. The national standard is  
12. We have had full support from the Mayor, Deputy  
Mayor, OMB to continue to hire on our frontline,  
whether that's child protective specialists, YDS,  
special officers, family court lawyers, so we really  
appreciate that that's been continued.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the  
budgeted and actual headcount for ACS case workers?

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I believe it's  
about 390 million that we spend in child protection  
each year. I'm not sure the PS. We will look for  
that.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Although I know  
you just said that the caseload is lower than the  
average, but what we're hearing is that case workers  
have overburden and not able to adequately follow up  
on cases leading to negative outcomes. What are the

1 guardrails that are in place to ensure significant  
2 check-ins and support are offered to our at-risk  
3 youth and family?  
4

5 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah, thank you  
6 for this question. We support our case workers.  
7 There's a six-month training for child protective  
8 specialists, includes both in the classroom and on  
9 the job. They then go into a training unit with  
10 dedicated supervisors who are very interested in  
11 training. There are peer mentors. We're one of the  
12 only places in the country that has dedicated  
13 investigative consultants so these are folks who have  
14 been typically detectives before their time with us,  
15 and they work in our borough offices supporting the  
16 decision-making of staff and also supporting their  
17 safety. We also have three supervisory levels to  
18 support staff to make sure they have someone to reach  
19 out to. They often go out in pairs, particularly on  
20 nights and weekends, and so we wrap around them every  
21 service that we possibly can to make sure they have  
22 the resources they need and the consultation. We have  
23 DV consultation, mental health, substance abuse  
24 consultation. These are very difficult assessments so  
25 staff walk in, they make an assessment, they're

1  
2 working with families. Our responsibility is to make  
3 sure we're doing an excellent assessment, whatever,  
4 whether it's CARES or an investigation, to make sure  
5 we're doing an excellent assessment and get families  
6 the help that they need and, in those rare cases  
7 where we have to act, act with urgency, and our staff  
8 are really dedicated to trying to make both of these  
9 things work. We're in too many families' lives,  
10 particularly black and brown families, and we have to  
11 protect children. We do not choose between those two.  
12 We think we can narrow our impact on families and  
13 protect children, and our staff have been dedicated  
14 to doing that and really, really grateful for them.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. What  
16 measures does ACS take to ensure case workers are  
17 acting in the best interest of youth? What trainings  
18 are provided to ensure that staff are well-informed  
19 in the most effective approach for at-risk children?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We do a lot of  
21 training in motivational interviewing. We also have a  
22 lot of training as it relates to Fair Futures.  
23 Motivational interviewing is essentially a model in  
24 which you work with people's intrinsic will to do  
25 well and sort of pull that out and so to work with a



1 young person, to start where they are, is really sort  
2 of that evidence-based model. Training in LGBTQIA-  
3 plus affirmation to make sure that everyone is  
4 getting treated with dignity and respect. They get  
5 implicit bias training. One of the things you'll see  
6 in the budget is some money moving over to our  
7 Workforce Institute. We've also launched a Leadership  
8 Institute because, to me, nothing's more important  
9 than the culture set by the foster care director in  
10 the local office or our borough commissioner, and so  
11 we're actually having leadership across ACS and  
12 providers come together so that we are the best that  
13 we can be for our staff and ultimately for children  
14 and families.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have any  
17 current challenges with filling case workers  
18 positions, and can you talk about those challenges  
19 you might be having, if you have any?

20 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We have the  
21 biggest class we've had in a long time starting next  
22 week, 150 CPS. Our dedicated HR teams have been  
23 working with our child protective leadership with a  
24 new strategy to do recruitment in boroughs. We used  
25 to do most of our hiring pools downtown, but we are

1 now out in Staten Island and Queens and we're seeing  
2 better matching of folks who want to work in that  
3 area, in that neighborhood, and I think that's part  
4 of the reason we've seen an increase in interest.  
5

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Great, and I'm  
7 happy that you guys had a huge class, but then that  
8 brings me to my next question because one of the  
9 things that our providers always talk about is their  
10 staffing issue and not being able to retain staff  
11 because there is no pay parity, and so I'm sure out  
12 of this 150 CPS workers that we're getting out of the  
13 class, I'm sure a bunch of them are coming from our  
14 providers, so what is ACS doing to improve pay parity  
15 between CBO providers and City positions?

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Many of us have  
17 gone back and forth between providers and government  
18 and we welcome that, but we take very seriously the  
19 needs of our providers and are really grateful. As  
20 folks know, our provider continuum provides  
21 preventive services, foster care, juvenile justice.  
22 They are the frontline. We are very grateful that the  
23 Mayor made an enormous investment in the provider  
24 community. There's also a call in the state budget  
25 for foster care where we're going to work hard to get

1 those resources out the door as quickly as possible  
2 because our providers deserve it and those staff  
3 deserve it.  
4

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, absolutely.

6 This is one of the things that the providers are  
7 always talking about, just the lack of having pay  
8 parity because it's true. A lot of those positions  
9 are similar, do the same work, but they can make more  
10 money working with you guys, and so definitely always  
11 making sure we're thinking about what does pay parity  
12 look like. We're excited about JustPay and getting  
13 the COLA for the human service sector, but I think we  
14 all know that the next fight is really around pay  
15 parity and how we can have equality amongst those  
16 salaries.

17 I just have a few more questions, and  
18 I'll turn it back over to the Chair, and it's on Fair  
19 Futures. Fair Futures is a program which was  
20 implemented five years ago, including one-on-one  
21 coaching, training, workshops, and mentorships for  
22 young people impacted by child welfare system across  
23 the city. This program is a shared priority for the  
24 City Council and the Administration. We know all the  
25 work you did in championing this. What is the current

1 budget for Fair Futures in Fiscal 2024, Fiscal 2025,  
2 and the out-years, and does the current budget  
3 support the demand, and how much was actually spent  
4 in Fiscal '23 and '24 thus far?

6 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The budget is  
7 30.7 million, and that's for '24 and '25. In FY23, it  
8 was a real ramp-up year. It was the first year that  
9 we expanded to young people who are older than 21. It  
10 was always the most important part for me of the  
11 vision that we stuck with young people. It's not just  
12 about providing more services while they're in care.  
13 You don't develop relationships that end one day  
14 because your status in foster care changes, and so we  
15 actually have reached over 500 young people in that  
16 21 to 26 category, but that was really ramping up in  
17 '23. About 14 million dollars has been invoiced and  
18 paid for '23. So far in '24, it's 10, but we expect  
19 the bulk of the invoices to be coming in shortly.  
20 We've expanded the number of youth served in that  
21 program each year. It was, I believe, 2,000-plus in  
22 '22, 3,900 in '23. It's over 4,000 now in '24 and  
23 growing, including that 500 young people who are ages  
24 21 to 26.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. How  
3 many young people are currently enrolled in the  
4 program and how many organizations does ACS partner  
5 with?

6 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We partner with  
7 all 24 of our foster care agencies to provide Fair  
8 Futures coaching. We also work with the Center for  
9 Fair Futures, which provides a lot of the training.  
10 We partner with them through our Workforce Institute,  
11 so every foster care provider has resources in their  
12 budget to make sure that they can reach young people  
13 with Fair Futures.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right. Those  
15 are all the questions I have for right now. I'll turn  
16 it back over to the Chair. Thank you.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair  
18 Stevens.

19 We've also been joined by Council Members  
20 Farías, Menin, Salaam, and Carr.

21 Now, we'll start with questions from  
22 Council Member Cabán followed by Restler.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you, and  
24 thank you for being here.

1  
2           Apologies, I stand up and walk around a  
3 lot. I've got some pretty bad back pain so thanks for  
4 your patience.

5           Okay, so I want to ask you mostly about  
6 Promise NYC, but I'm going to start somewhere else  
7 really briefly and just ask a little bit about the  
8 processing time for eligibility verification for  
9 childcare seats because it's gone down for a while  
10 for DOE, but we're still hearing concerns that the  
11 process is taking over six weeks to get cleared for  
12 extended day and year seats that are run by ACS so  
13 can you share with us what the average processing  
14 time for someone filling out their application to a  
15 child sitting in a classroom is?

16           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Sure. We just  
17 got under 30 days this past month so we've been  
18 working very hard to ramp up our processing capacity.  
19 We were processing about 1,000 applications and now  
20 we're up over 4,500 most months. Our teams have  
21 worked to look at performance of our staff and to  
22 make sure that they're trained to do this well so we  
23 are meeting that target of 30 days.

24           COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you, and I  
25 might need some tech help here because my tablet is

1 bugging out. Yeah, I'm just, I have my questions on  
2 here. Oh my God, yours is bugging out too. They're  
3 all, are they all? Can we pause my time? Damn. Yeah,  
4 they're all bugging out. Technology, y'all. Thanks  
5 for the patience. Right? Yes, thank you.

7 UNKNOWN: I'll give you the contraband  
8 paper.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you. There's  
10 still a place for paper. Don't tell the environmental  
11 folks.

12 Okay, so I just want to ask you about  
13 Promise NYC, and I want to start by thanking y'all  
14 because I just think this is probably one of the  
15 best, most impactful things that ACS does in  
16 partnership with obviously the groups that are  
17 working on it like CPC and La Colmena. This is  
18 critical. We know how important childcare is for the  
19 safety and the health of our city, and so I know I'm  
20 not alone in saying that we desperately want to see  
21 this scaled to the size that we need it to,  
22 especially with a lot of our newly arriving neighbors  
23 arriving who need this support, and there've been all  
24 of these fiscal reports being done that have done  
25 right when supporting our newly arrived immigrant

1 neighbors. We're looking at potential of billions  
2 added to our economy so this is just important on a  
3 lot of fronts so the Fiscal 2024 adopted budget  
4 included a 16-million-dollar new need for Promise NYC  
5 in Fiscal Year '24. I'm just going to ask a series of  
6 quick questions. Yeah, thank you. And the Executive  
7 Plan, and I think this is the same thing that  
8 happened last year, the Executive Plan doesn't  
9 include any additional funding for the program,  
10 despite us calling for a 25-million-dollar expansion  
11 and baselining Promise NYC in the Preliminary Budget  
12 response. I know that's what advocates and childcare  
13 providers are saying what's needed, so here's, I'm  
14 just going to throw all the questions at you. Is the  
15 program going to continue in Fiscal 2025 and beyond?  
16 Is ACS advocating for the program to be baselined?  
17 And if so, at what level? This is a really important  
18 question because I want you all to talk about how  
19 impactful, like what are the good things coming out  
20 of Promise NYC? And then talk to me about what  
21 happens to the families currently utilizing it if  
22 it's not included in the upcoming budget? Because I  
23 know the funding is running out this month so it's  
24 really critical, and then can you provide the most  
25



1 recent utilization data for Promise NYC broken down  
2 by borough? How many new families have enrolled that  
3 did not participate in the program the Fiscal Year  
4 before that? Finally, are the contracting providers  
5 keeping waiting lists, and how many families are  
6 currently on those lists, and what's been spent to  
7 date? I throw a lot at you, but I'm looking forward  
8 to hearing some answers on that. Thanks.

9  
10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you,  
11 Council Member, and thank you for your championing of  
12 this important program. I'll try to do my best to get  
13 to all of them, and you can remind me if I missed  
14 any.

15 Promise NYC has about 650 children  
16 enrolled in it. This year has a 16-million-dollar  
17 budget. About 180 new children were enrolled during  
18 the Fiscal Year. NMIC in the Bronx is about 125; NMIC  
19 in Manhattan, 110; Center for Family Life in  
20 Brooklyn, 197; Chinese American Planning Council in  
21 Queens, 204; and La Comena in Staten Island is 20.  
22 Those might have been updated over time. We don't  
23 keep waiting lists for this program, but we  
24 understand that the providers do understand who has  
25

1 expressed interest and will be able to contact them  
2 if.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Because my  
5 understanding is the need is so great that they just  
6 stop keeping the list because it just would  
7 (INAUDIBLE) they're sort of instructed not to keep...

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yeah. The need's  
9 extraordinary. The fundamental reason for Promise,  
10 which is fully City tax levy, is because federal and  
11 state resources don't support childcare for  
12 undocumented immigrants, and so we need to also be  
13 advocating for change at that level. This is fully  
14 City tax levy. We're talking to OMB about Fiscal Year  
15 '25. We've shared with providers that if we're not  
16 able to fully invest in this program, that we'll have  
17 a thoughtful close down so do not start dis-  
18 enrolling, do not start informing folks. We want to  
19 make sure that we keep as much stability as we  
20 possibly can as we look at what will be in the Fiscal  
21 Year '25 budget. I had the pleasure of visiting a  
22 family daycare on Wednesday. There were five children  
23 enrolled there who were Promise children, and it is  
24 clear that it's really important for families. It is  
25 really important for the development of young people.

1  
2 It was wonderful to see them at this bilingual family  
3 daycare getting all of the developmental needs met so  
4 this program is important and we're going to continue  
5 to have conversations with OMB and with the Council.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Just to wrap up, I  
7 just want to say whether we're getting funds from  
8 elsewhere or not, we should and can fully fund it  
9 right here in the City because what it means is when  
10 an immigrant family has childcare, it means that they  
11 can go get employment. It means that we're not seeing  
12 more children selling candy with their families on  
13 the street. It means that there's stability and  
14 people are able to stay in stable housing. All of  
15 those things are critical to all of our safety and  
16 health so I think obviously, these funds we can't use  
17 from state or federal because of different laws, but  
18 we have the power to do that here in New York City  
19 and we should. Thank you. Thank you, Chairs.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, now we have  
21 questions from Council Member Restler followed by  
22 Williams.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so  
24 much, Chair Brannan and Chair Stevens, and good to  
25

1 see you, Commissioner Dannhauser, Deputy Commissioner  
2 Saunders, ACS team. Good to see you all.

3  
4 I really just want to firstly echo and  
5 express gratitude to Chair Stevens for her leadership  
6 around and her focus on decarceration among our young  
7 people. One of the statistics that's most disturbing  
8 to me is the extraordinary growth we've seen in the  
9 number of minors who were held in jail and secured  
10 detention under the Adams' Administration. I think we  
11 went from about 150 at the beginning of the Adams'  
12 Administration to today, how many young people do we  
13 have in secured detention?

14 UNKNOWN: (INAUDIBLE)

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 236, was that  
16 the?

17 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: 232.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 232. Okay, so  
19 we're down a few, but still way up, so one of the  
20 things that was highlighted that we noticed in exec  
21 was that we saw about an 11-million-dollar cut in the  
22 secured detention budget from, I believe, 70-odd  
23 million to about 59 million. Is that right?

24 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And so how, when  
3 we've seen this extraordinary growth in the number of  
4 young people that were detaining and putting in jail,  
5 could we possibly manage a 16.5 percent cut in the  
6 funding to actually provide them with the services  
7 that they need?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I'm going to  
9 have to get back to you on exactly what happened in  
10 that swap. There's no resource reduction in hiring  
11 staff and putting in programming so...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 16.5 percent is a  
13 very big number so maybe there's something that we're  
14 misreading in the Executive Budget and there's other  
15 resources coming from someplace else, but...

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: So we don't have  
17 any cuts in the detention budget. I understand what  
18 you're saying. You're seeing two different numbers.  
19 We'll get clarity on that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. If you  
21 could get back to us in writing, we'd really  
22 appreciate it. Just, because my time is tight, I'm  
23 going to shift to a different topic, but we are very  
24 eager to partner effectively with, actually, I'll  
25 just ask one more question. The Department of

1  
2 Probation has implemented a series of very aggressive  
3 cuts to prevention programs that could help keep  
4 young people out of secured detention. Is ACS doing  
5 anything to help see those programs restored, such as  
6 Impact, Arches, Next Steps, that could help us drive  
7 down our young people who are incarcerated?

8           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: You know, we're  
9 very pleased that the Executive Budget has an  
10 additional 10 million dollars for alternatives to  
11 incarceration and re-entry services at MOCJ so  
12 there's been a lot of focus and conversation about  
13 this. We're also looking at, as I was mentioning  
14 earlier, using our alternative to detention programs  
15 and aging them up. We're working on a pilot right now  
16 with cases so we're trying to use every tool in our  
17 toolkit.

18           COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We appreciate it.  
19 I think that, you know, as partners go within this  
20 Administration, I certainly see ACS as more of a  
21 partner than many of your sibling agencies.

22           Just finally, a couple questions on  
23 vouchers. I'm concerned with the expiration of the  
24 federally funded, with the stimulus dollars, that we  
25 may see a decline in vouchers. I think ACS has done a

1 great job in connecting my constituents to voucher  
2 opportunities we really appreciate it. I know that  
3 the Chair Brannan asked about this as well, but are  
4 there any assurances that we'll be able to sustain  
5 the scale of vouchers that have been made available  
6 during the beginning of this Administration in future  
7 years?  
8

9 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Certainly, we  
10 can commit to that certainly for Fiscal Year '25. A  
11 lot of this will depend on state investments. The  
12 Governor has been vocal on saying they're going to be  
13 increasing state investments. Our state partners,  
14 OCFS, have said to us to continue to enroll. We're  
15 still awaiting our allocation for the coming Fiscal  
16 Year, and so we'll see what those look like but, for  
17 Fiscal Year '25...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And then the last  
19 question I'd just like to ask as my time has expired.  
20 We've seen that in early childhood education seats,  
21 there's been a tremendous under-enrollment in the  
22 extended day, extended year seats, and I know all of  
23 your early childhood experts at ACS know well, these  
24 are the seats that families really need, really  
25 depend on, that allow working families to actually

1 work so my recollection of the data was that 43  
2 percent of 3-K seats, extended day, extended year  
3 seats were actually filled. Most in a place like  
4 District 16 in Ocean Hill, Brownsville, just 13  
5 percent of extended day, extended year seats were  
6 actually filled despite everybody in that community  
7 being income eligible so there's a serious disconnect  
8 of what's happening at DOE. I'm looking for our  
9 sibling agencies like ACS and HRA to do more to help  
10 connect every family who's getting a voucher, is  
11 eligible for those extended day, extended year seats.  
12 Is there more that ACS can do to help us fill those  
13 seats effectively? What have you been doing and what  
14 can we do moving forward? Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you. We  
17 are really working obviously through MyCity at sort  
18 of a joint application. That's been one of the  
19 reasons we've seen such a nice uptick in voucher  
20 enrollment. We also are focused on high-need  
21 community districts to make sure that families there  
22 are aware, and we've seen a 500 percent increase in  
23 those community districts outpacing citywide growth,  
24 which is slowly addressing an equity issue that has  
25 been longstanding. We're also working with Robin Hood



1 on a program where we are going to be working, we  
2 learned a lot from Promise, community-based  
3 organizations, closer to communities, trusted by  
4 communities to work with some community-based  
5 organizations to see if we can extend that learning  
6 to ensure that families are aware and can get  
7 enrolled in childcare of all varieties. Thank you.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Now we have  
10 questions from Council Member Williams followed by  
11 Joseph.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello. Good  
13 morning.

14 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Good morning.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I have some  
16 questions about the Workforce Institute. In the  
17 Executive Plan, 3.8 million dollars was included in  
18 Fiscal 2024 only from a combination of federal,  
19 state, and city funding sources for ACS Workforce  
20 Institute. Can you explain to the Committee what the  
21 Workforce Institute is, and does ACS partner with any  
22 other City agencies or entities for this program?

23 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes. Thank you,  
24 Council Member. The Workforce Institute is our  
25 training department. It is in partnership with CUNY,

1  
2 and so the resources that you see there are to extend  
3 a lot of the training that we're doing for staff, for  
4 foster parents, the trauma-informed program for  
5 foster parents. It includes our Leadership Institute.  
6 It also includes Fair Futures training and  
7 motivational interviewing training. This was  
8 something that was created, I believe, in 2018, the  
9 Workforce Institute to pair with our Satterwhite  
10 Academy, which is the Academy for Child Protective  
11 Specialists in YDS, and it's been a really, really  
12 wonderful extension. Providers take advantage of a  
13 whole host of...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I was going to  
15 ask if providers...

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: (INAUDIBLE)

18 Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We have  
20 thousands of provider staff have taken advantage of  
21 trainings from them.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Awesome. I also  
23 had a question about rights notices to families under  
24 investigation. We know there's a new campaign and  
25 just wanted a little bit more information about the

1  
2 campaign. Is the campaign now citywide and, if not,  
3 when will it be expanded to citywide?

4           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you for  
5 this. So just to say a couple of words. This is an  
6 initiative that we started in October as a pilot and  
7 then have early in the year of this Calendar Year, we  
8 determined to go citywide. We have provided 4,000-  
9 plus notices. By Memorial Day, all of our staff will  
10 be trained in this new protocol and we will be  
11 citywide.

12           COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. To go back  
13 to the Workforce Institute, what type of employees  
14 are eligible? Can anybody take any programming? You  
15 just have like a list of courses and anyone can kind  
16 of sign up.

17           COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: There are  
18 courses that are mandated. Obviously, becoming a new  
19 child protective specialist, we have a prevention  
20 onboarding program. We are developing a foster care  
21 onboarding program so those will be expected and  
22 mandated. There's also mandates around training for  
23 LGBTQIA-plus and implicit bias, and then there are  
24 sort of electives, if you will, to come learn more  
25 about a particular practice that you might be working

1 at, and that is learn about leadership and those are  
2 more elective.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. One  
5 more question. Back to rights and notices. I know you  
6 said you distributed 4,000 notices. Where were they  
7 distributed? Do you have like a borough breakdown?

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We do. I don't  
9 have the exact numbers, but pretty much citywide  
10 across boroughs. We started the pilot in Brownsville  
11 and then a few neighborhoods in the Bronx, and then  
12 we've been extending from there, going zone by zone.  
13 As you know, we're organized in zones in our borough  
14 infrastructure and we'll be done in the next few  
15 weeks.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, and are  
17 there any media strategies also included in this  
18 because it seems very grassroots, which grassroots, I  
19 think, is always the way to go, but do you have any  
20 other plans to diversify your outreach?

21 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We are making  
22 sure that it's available on our website. There's been  
23 a daily news coverage of this initiative. I'm  
24 planning on doing some media outreach next week  
25

1  
2 around this and other things so we want to get the  
3 word out for sure.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah. Thank you,  
5 Chairs.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, now we have  
7 questions from Council Member Joseph followed by  
8 Louis.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Good morning.  
10 Great to see you all here.

11 I have a couple of questions. In the 6.5  
12 million for the foster care recruitment and retention  
13 to be used to address the shortage of foster homes,  
14 how many homes do you have now, and what's the  
15 shortage rate?

16 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We have, I  
17 believe, around 3,000 foster homes right now. We have  
18 in our pipeline another 400 or so and, as you know,  
19 Council Member, we're working really hard to rely on  
20 kinship foster parents. About half of our children  
21 entering care are going to kinship and making sure  
22 that we're providing them the resources and support  
23 that they need.

24

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely.  
3 Kinship and KinGAP, I've always advocated for that as  
4 well.

5 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you for  
7 that, and out of your 4.4 million for foster care  
8 education and employment services to support youth in  
9 achieving academic and career success, can you give  
10 us a little elaboration on that? And the last time  
11 you guys were here in our hearing for Close to Home,  
12 it was a question that I had asked around students  
13 being in school. What's your relationship once a  
14 child is in your care? Let's say, for example, they  
15 have an IEP. What's the relationship between you and  
16 D79, which when I believe your Commissioner was here,  
17 she said it was all on D79. Is that true or is there  
18 a partnership because I would like to know if a child  
19 comes into your care, it has to be two agencies  
20 working together for the child to achieve success,  
21 right?

22 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Absolutely. It  
23 is a partnership. I believe what our Deputy  
24 Commissioner was saying was who is doing the  
25 assessment, but it's absolutely a partnership. For

1  
2 young people who come into our care, we actually have  
3 a very robust data match with the Department of  
4 Education, New York City Public Schools, where we are  
5 getting information on things like attendance, things  
6 like promotion and doubt so we can target where we  
7 need to intervene and make sure that young people  
8 have what they need if they need to have a new school  
9 setting, if they needed another service and, really,  
10 we really do focus on school stability on entry. We  
11 don't want children to lose their community but, if  
12 we discover over the course of their time with us  
13 that they could use a different setting or service,  
14 then we work with our partners in New York City  
15 Public Schools, as you know and advocated for, thank  
16 you, they have a new office dedicated to young people  
17 who are in our care, which has been a real boon.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely, and a  
19 bill to attach to that, because we wanted to capture  
20 the data. There's never been data on that unique  
21 population of students in foster care from K to 12 so  
22 I was really excited to work on that as well as how  
23 about employment? How do we track our young people to  
24 make sure that when they enter our care, if they stay  
25

1 with us, how we're putting them on a pathway to  
2 success.

3  
4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: That data is  
5 going to be captured in a new database for Fair  
6 Futures called Care For so we're working  
7 specifically, we have a really excellent leader for  
8 workforce development. As I was mentioning earlier,  
9 we're going to have over a thousand young people plus  
10 an SYAP this summer, and then we have a  
11 Commissioner's internship program. We have lots of  
12 young people at ACS throughout the summer, which is a  
13 real joy.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Chairs, can I ask  
15 one more question, please?

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. How  
18 will the 5.5 for foster care mental health and  
19 wellness services. Can you walk me through that  
20 process?

21 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Most of that is  
22 for services looking at for young people who are  
23 coming into care. We are working on training for  
24 foster care agencies in lots of new trauma models.  
25 There are new models that are not intrusive,



1 especially if young people don't want to be in  
2 traditional therapy, and so using sort of stimulation  
3 of eyes and different things so a lot of that is  
4 investing in training up providers so all of our  
5 providers have young people in foster care and  
6 Medicaid-managed care, and so there's resources that  
7 come through Medicaid directly to our foster care  
8 providers and they provide the medical and mental  
9 health or contract for it so our role is really  
10 around making sure the mental health of young people  
11 coming into care, if they're at the Children's  
12 Center, and in helping to provide new training for  
13 our providers so that they can add to their array of  
14 services.  
15

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. How  
17 many unaccompanied minors do you have in care right  
18 now?

19 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: The number in  
20 care I don't have for you. What I can say is we have  
21 seen an increase in the number of children who are  
22 destitute and are coming to us. Typically, it was 40  
23 to 50 in a given year. Last year, it was 90. So far  
24 this Calendar Year, we have over 40 young people who  
25 have come into our care as destitute. Some of that is

1 unaccompanied minors. We don't track it that way  
2 exactly, but we know where we're filing petitions  
3 because a young person comes to us or a provider  
4 calls us and they are destitute. Their family is not  
5 here and they need to come into our care and they get  
6 all of the services and supports that any other young  
7 person in foster care will get.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Including language  
10 access and everything culturally.

11 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Indeed. Our  
12 language access budget for the Children's Center has  
13 increasingly been going up and making sure that they  
14 have everything they need in whatever dialect they  
15 speak and whatever language that they speak.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How do you do  
17 recruitment if you're looking to place that child?

18 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: We're looking at  
19 that. I think traditionally, it's been more Spanish-  
20 speaking, and so we're seeing a much greater  
21 diversity in language and so we want to get the word  
22 out. We've been able to place sibling groups and  
23 young people. There are times where we find a loving  
24 placement, there isn't someone who speaks that  
25 dialect, and then we use translation and

1  
2 interpretation services to do the best we can, and  
3 then obviously work with schools and all the great  
4 work they're doing around this.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we have  
8 questions from Council Member Louis followed by  
9 Sanchez on Zoom.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair,  
11 and good morning. Thank you all for being here.

12 I have a couple of questions so I'll just  
13 state them and then you guys could feel free to  
14 answer as best as you can.

15 The Interagency Asylum Seeker Task Force  
16 that was formed by ACS, DOE, and GBV to provide  
17 outreach to families at asylum-seeker shelters  
18 regarding school enrollment for their children, so I  
19 wanted to know, how does the task force provide  
20 information to asylum seeker families and what  
21 languages are available to ensure that you can  
22 effectively serve them? What is ACS' role in the task  
23 force? How many students have been enrolled in school  
24 with the assistance of the task force? What other  
25 agencies are involved with the task force? Do you

1 anticipate in the FY25 budget an impact if you have  
2 to add additional agencies to the actual task force?  
3 What would that look like potentially? The other  
4 question I have is in regards to Horizon and  
5 Crossroads. Would you be able to tell us how many  
6 young people would fit the criteria of asylum-seekers  
7 and how does the task force support the young people  
8 at Crossroads and Horizons?  
9

10 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you. We've  
11 been working with our sibling agencies, City  
12 agencies, for the last couple of years on these  
13 important issues and making sure we're meeting the  
14 needs of asylum-seekers. A lot is centered around  
15 that task force. We have also, led by our Division of  
16 Prevention Services, have been having providers  
17 sponsor a HERRC or a shelter. We had a number of  
18 events this spring out at shelters to get information  
19 out, of the variety that you're speaking about.  
20 Schools, ways in which they can get support, concrete  
21 resources that we can provide them. We're really  
22 working to get to where they're living and where they  
23 are to make sure they know all the resources that the  
24 City can provide. We have our new hotline in place  
25 and our new website to make sure there's contact

1 there. We do not at this point, I believe, have any  
2 young people who are classified as asylum-seekers at  
3 Horizon or Crossroads. We are using translation there  
4 because there are some Spanish-speaking-only young  
5 people there, and I can get you a number if any young  
6 people have come to us as asylum-seekers.  
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. Thank  
9 you, Chair.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Council  
11 Member Sanchez on Zoom followed by Brooks-Powers.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Good morning.  
13 Thank you, Chairs Brannan and Stevens, and good  
14 morning, Commissioner.

15 I wanted to start with recent data from  
16 ACS, which is shedding light on the disproportionate  
17 impact of emergency removals on communities of color,  
18 with black children accounting for 41 percent and  
19 Latinx children accounting for 38 percent of  
20 emergency removals, despite only accounting for 35  
21 and 55 percent of the child population respectively,  
22 and the removals concentrated in neighborhoods like  
23 Williamsbridge, Baychester, Soundview, Parkchester in  
24 the Bronx, Hollis in East New York. My first question  
25 is, how does the Administration interpret these

1 inequities, and what steps has the Agency taken to  
2 improve upon the inequities, and my second question  
3 is what measures are in place to ensure that families  
4 are aware of and able to access mental health  
5 services after any childhood removal? How are these  
6 resources made available currently? And, if you have  
7 the ability to answer this question, what percentage  
8 of children who face removals and are then returned  
9 home are able to access mental healthcare within a  
10 year or a specific timeframe? Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you,  
13 Council Member, for the question. This obviously is  
14 deeply important. As you may know, it is seven times  
15 more likely that a black child is a subject of a  
16 state central register report as a white child, and  
17 Hispanic/Latinx is five times more likely than a  
18 white child, and we take these racial disparities  
19 very seriously. As it relates to removals, we have  
20 been decreasing the number of removals. We actually  
21 saw a marked decrease during COVID, and we're at  
22 about the same level now. You're speaking about a  
23 subset of removals that are emergency removals, which  
24 are about half of our removals. When we proceed to  
25 court, we worked with advocates. They asked us in

1 those instances to not have a child safety conference  
2 but to go directly into court to ensure due process  
3 for families, and we have made that adjustment so to  
4 get legal support in there as quickly as possible. We  
5 also, what we see when we go to court is about three  
6 quarters of the young people are placed into foster  
7 care after emergency removal. The rest usually have  
8 some sort of supervision. Sometimes in the middle of  
9 the night, there's no caretaker for a child, but  
10 we're able to resolve that in the morning and the  
11 child will come into foster care. When children are  
12 removed, parents work with the provider agency that  
13 they are assigned to and placed with, and they have a  
14 whole host of services in each community around  
15 mental health. Obviously, that engagement can be  
16 difficult work, and our providers work diligently to  
17 try to support parents. I wouldn't have the numbers  
18 about mental health resources post a child not coming  
19 into care just because we don't have a way to track  
20 that, but I share your interest in that and concern  
21 about that, and we will look for ways to do some  
22 outreach there or have other providers outreach to  
23 make sure that there are services available.  
24  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner. Just a followup, does that mean then  
4 that of children that are placed into care, they all  
5 are able to access mental health services?

6 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Absolutely.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner, and thank you, Chairs.

9 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,  
11 Council Member. We've also been joined by Council  
12 Member Powers.

13 Now, we have questions from Council  
14 Member Brooks-Powers followed by Menin.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
16 Chairs, and thank you for today's testimony.

17 I wanted to just spend a quick moment on  
18 headcount and vacancies. The Executive Plan transfers  
19 27 positions across budget codes, BC0503 to 0509.  
20 Which program did these positions originate from, and  
21 where were they transferred to, why was the transfer  
22 made and, of the 27 positions, how many are vacant,  
23 and what are the titles? Then separately, as of March  
24 2024, ACS had a 9.2 percent vacancy rate with  
25 approximately 653 positions vacant. Does the Agency



1 have adequate headcount to effectively run all of its  
2 programs and initiatives? If not, please detail, and  
3 in which areas or programs does ACS have vacancies,  
4 is the agency actively seeking to fill the positions,  
5 and what are the priority positions that ACS is most  
6 focused on hiring? I can repeat any of those.

8 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I'll appreciate  
9 that. I'll start and see where we are. We're really  
10 excited about this transfer of positions. As you may  
11 know, the number of families that we're filing family  
12 court cases related to has been coming down sharply.  
13 In 2017, we were supervising over 5,000 families.  
14 Today, we're supervising about 2,500, and so the  
15 staff dedicated to that supervision, court-ordered  
16 supervision, is in our family services unit, and so  
17 with that sort of caseload coming way down, we're  
18 looking at how can we take resources from downstream  
19 around supervision and move them upstream, and so  
20 that transfer will move to our Family Preservation  
21 Program. These are also CPS, so it's same title.  
22 They'll move. It's on a voluntary basis. They would  
23 move, be re-trained, and then they can deploy, and  
24 they don't have a sort of case, if you will. They're  
25 really there to help families with access to

benefits, to resolving issues that are creating safety issues. This is, we're hoping, can really enhance our toolkit around safety while we continue to not use removals unless we absolutely have to so we're excited about that.

Overall, we have seen increases in availability of child protective staff, increases in youth development specialists and special officers. We are hiring for all of those and continue to have classes. We just had a class finish for CPS. We have a new one starting. As I was mentioning earlier, we have a new class of 150 CPS. It's the biggest class we've had in some time. We have a graduation for YDS today, and so we are continuing to hire to make sure that all the vacancies are filled.

Anything I missed?

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Nope, that's it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, now we have questions Council Member Menin.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much, Chair Brannan and Chair Stevens.

1  
2 I have a question on your testimony. You  
3 testified that there are now over 37,000 children  
4 enrolled in childcare with a low-income voucher  
5 helping offset costs to the family, a 105 percent  
6 increase from this time last year. Now, we know that  
7 approximately 375,000 parents had to leave the  
8 workforce in recent years because they could not  
9 access affordable and accessible childcare, costing  
10 the City over 2.2 billion dollars in lost economic  
11 revenue. My question is the Council passed a package  
12 of bills last year to get New York City on the path  
13 to universal childcare. One of those bills creates an  
14 advisory board. What is your role in that advisory  
15 board and getting us on a path to universal  
16 childcare?

17 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you,  
18 Council Member. We are a member of that advisory  
19 board. Typically, our Deputy Commissioner, Elizabeth  
20 Wolkomir represents us there. It's run by the Mayor's  
21 Office of Childcare. We absolutely have an agenda to  
22 grow childcare and to make it as expansive as  
23 possible. We appreciate your call towards universal  
24 care so the number that you referenced is accurate.  
25 We've seen 105 percent increase. If you go back

1 another year, it was only 7,000 enrolled in low-  
2 income vouchers and now we're at 37,000, and we have  
3 the green light to continue to enroll families in  
4 childcare.  
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: In terms of the  
7 vouchers, one of the other Council bills requires a  
8 subsidy portal to access federal, state and city  
9 subsidies. Can you give an update on what is  
10 happening there with that portal and the number of  
11 families who are able to access those subsidies?

12 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I believe it's  
13 been completed. There's also MyCity, which has been  
14 amazing...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Yeah, the subsidy  
16 portal is complete. I guess what I'm asking is what  
17 is the Agency's role in helping families access that  
18 portal to ensure that families are able to take  
19 advantage of every single subsidy that is available  
20 to them because one of the problems is a lot of  
21 families are not aware that there are various  
22 subsidies that they can access so what is the agency  
23 proactively doing to get families to that portal and  
24 helping them navigate that portal?  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you. We  
3 traditionally have not had that type of program at  
4 ACS. We were developing actually with Robin Hood and  
5 also with Casey Family Programs and work to make sure  
6 all the families that we interact with have access to  
7 not only that portal but knowledge about all the  
8 resources that are available to them. We do a lot of  
9 work on housing for families that folks might not  
10 know about. We work with a new organization called  
11 Anthos, both for families to get them into housing  
12 from our preventive services and young people who are  
13 leaving care, and so we're growing this.

14                   COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: How many languages  
15 is a portal currently available in?

16                   COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: I believe all of  
17 the citywide languages, the 11 citywide.

18                   My team is just sharing with me. There's  
19 also been a campaign about MyCity that has been  
20 growing.

21                   COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you.

22                   COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you.

23                   CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay,  
24 Commissioner and your team, thank you so much for  
25

1 your testimony today. We look forward to working with  
2 you on this budget.

3  
4 COMMISSIONER DANNHAUSER: Thank you, Chair  
5 Brannan, and thank you, Chair Stevens.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, so we'll  
7 take a break until noon when we'll hear from DYCD in  
8 about 45 minutes. Thank you.

9 [GAVEL] Okay, good afternoon. We're now  
10 ready to begin the final Executive Budget hearing for  
11 the day and for the week. We'll be focused on the  
12 Department of Youth and Community Development. I'm  
13 still joined by my Colleague and Chair of the  
14 Committee on Children and Youth, Council Member  
15 Althea Stevens.

16 Welcome, Commissioner Howard and your  
17 team. Thank you all for joining us today to answer  
18 our questions.

19 Just to set the table here, on April 24,  
20 2024, the Administration released their Executive  
21 Financial Plan for FY24 to '28 with a proposed FY25  
22 budget of 111.6 billion dollars. DYCD's proposed FY25  
23 budget of 1.2 billion represents 1.1 percent of the  
24 Administration's proposed FY25 budget in the  
25 Executive Plan. This is an increase of 52 million, or

1 4 percent, from the originally proposed 1.1 billion  
2 in the Preliminary Plan. This increase results  
3 largely from new baseline funding for the CMS, Crisis  
4 Management System, and the Neighborhood Safety  
5 Alliance anti-gun violence programs, increased  
6 funding for the job connections program, and a cost-  
7 of-living adjustment for the human service workers at  
8 non-profits.  
9

10 As of March 2024, DYCD had 39 vacancies  
11 relative to their budgeted headcount in FY24. My  
12 questions today will largely focus on the Office of  
13 Neighborhood Safety and the Administration's inaction  
14 on items in the Council's DYCD Preliminary Budget  
15 response. In the response, the Council called for a  
16 restoration of 44.4 million dollars, the DYCD budget  
17 cut, along with 14.9 million to support several  
18 programs for runaway and homeless youth, and 10  
19 million dollars for adult literacy, none of which the  
20 administration acted upon. What restorations the  
21 Mayor has made in the Executive Budget represent a  
22 fraction of the unnecessary cuts made to programs  
23 that support some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.  
24 As I mentioned earlier today, the Council has  
25 identified more than enough available resources to do

right by these communities and these agencies.

There's no need to balance the budget on the backs of runaway kids.

I now want to turn to my co-chair for this hearing, Council Member Althea Stevens, for her opening statement.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good afternoon, and welcome to Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget hearing for the Department of Youth and Community Service. I'm Council Member Althea Stevens, Chair of the Committee on Children and Youth.

Today we will be hearing from DYCD's Commissioner Keith Howard, First Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng, and Chief Financial Officer Nydia Bailey. Thank you for joining us.

After discussing the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget for DYCD a few weeks ago, we are here again to discuss the Fiscal Executive Expense Budget, which stands at 1.2 billion. The Executive Budget includes an additional 13.8 million for human service costs of living increase, COLA win, which provides a 3 percent increase over the three years for those employed by City-contracted non-profit organizations, which we are all very happy about. The



1  
2 plan also added 9.4 million for the Officer of  
3 Economic Opportunity Adjustment for the Advanced and  
4 Earn Program that helps to train employee young  
5 adults ages 16 through 24. DYCD's Fiscal 2025  
6 Executive Budget has three new needs, Crisis  
7 Management System expansion, 8.6 million; Job  
8 Connection Program, 16.9 million; and Neighborhood  
9 Safety Alliance, 2.5 million. As we continue with  
10 today's Executive Budget hearing, I would like to  
11 know more about each of those new needs and services  
12 associated with them.

13           I must also say that the Fiscal 2025  
14 Preliminary Budget, I was pleased to learn that the  
15 once backlog of DYCD contract no longer exists.  
16 However, after talking with providers, there was a  
17 number of them that said that that was not  
18 necessarily the case. DYCD also stated in the last  
19 Preliminary hearing, they would be meeting with legal  
20 providers regarding the PEGs. However, I was also  
21 informed that that meeting still hasn't taken place,  
22 although those services will be eliminated due to the  
23 PEGs very shortly. I hope we can get a better  
24 understanding of this today.

1  
2 I am continuously disappointed by the  
3 lack of urgency that the City continues to show when  
4 it comes to runaway and homeless youth, RHY. Every  
5 day we are reminded that there's a need for more beds  
6 in the RHY system. The budget response for DYCD, a  
7 total value of 73.1 million included seven  
8 priorities, four of which related to the high demand  
9 of our RHY youth for additional beds, housing  
10 navigators, and residential contracts. I'm  
11 disappointed to see that none of those were funded  
12 and was added into the Executive Budget. My hope is  
13 that we will be able to include them in the adopted  
14 budget for the thousands of young people who  
15 desperately need these services. We can no longer  
16 wait and see what happens. Now it is time we must  
17 make sure that we are pushing our young people in the  
18 right direction. We must invest in the programs that  
19 will make a difference for our youth. As summer is  
20 approaching, we all agree that we want to see  
21 children enjoy summer camp, young people developing  
22 new workforce skills, and our community centers being  
23 safe havens. However, as the budget stands, those  
24 things are in jeopardy.

1  
2           The Fiscal 2025 adopted budget is fast  
3 approaching. The Council will continue to fight to  
4 ensure that the City budget is fair, transparent, and  
5 accountable to all New Yorkers. As Chair of the  
6 Committee on Children and Youth, I will continue to  
7 advocate for accountability, accuracy, and to ensure  
8 that the budget represents the needs and interests of  
9 children and young people across the city and that  
10 the programs are equipped with adequate funding to  
11 serve everyone in need. My expectation is that DYCD  
12 will be responsive to the questions and concerns of  
13 Council Members. I hope that the Fiscal 2025 adopted  
14 budget meets the goals set forth by the Council. We  
15 want to ensure that program is provided with the  
16 necessities to meet everyday challenges our youth  
17 face.

18           I would like to take this opportunity to  
19 thank my Chief-of-Staff, Lamont, and the entire A-  
20 Team back in the District Office, Sandra Gray,  
21 Financial Analyst; Aliya Ali, Unit Head; Christine  
22 Yellamaty, Counsel to the Committee; and Elizabeth  
23 Arzt, Policy Analyst to the Committee. I would now  
24 like to turn it back over to Chair Brannan.

25           CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair.

1  
2           Before we get started, I also want to  
3 take a quick minute just to thank the entire Finance  
4 Division who works very, very hard behind the scenes,  
5 especially this whole week and today, preparing for  
6 these hearings, most especially to Aliya Ali and  
7 Sandra Gray, my Committee Counsel, Mike Twomey, and  
8 all the Finance Analysts.

9           Once again, for this year's Executive  
10 Budget joint hearings, we'll take public testimony on  
11 an agency's Executive Budget the same day, meaning  
12 after DYCD is finished testifying. If you haven't, if  
13 you wish to speak on DYCD and you're here today or  
14 you're watching on Zoom, you got to make sure to fill  
15 out a witness slip and sign up with the Sergeant-at-  
16 Arms.

17           I'll now turn it over to our Committee  
18 Counsel to swear in the witnesses and we can get  
19 started.

20           COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Good afternoon.  
21 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and  
22 nothing but the truth before this Committee and to  
23 respond honestly to Council Member questions?  
24 Commissioner Howard.

25           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

101

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Deputy  
3 Commissioner Cheng.

4 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: CFO Bailey.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Yes.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Darryl Rattray.

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Yes.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Daphne

10 Montanez.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Susan Haskell.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yes.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Julie Breitman.

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BREITMAN: Yes.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Mike Bobbitt.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Yes.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: And Rong Zhang.

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Yes.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Thank you. You

21 may begin.

22 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Good afternoon,

23 Chair Stevens and Chair Brannan and Members of the

24 Committee on Children and Youth and Finance. I am

25 DYCD's Commissioner Keith Howard. I am joined today

1  
2 by First Deputy Commissioner Alan Cheng and Chief  
3 Financial Officer Nevita Bailey. We are pleased to be  
4 here to discuss the Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget.

5           The budget stands at 1.17 billion. It is  
6 composed of 926.8 million or 78.54 percent in City  
7 tax levy funds, 141.2 million or 11.97 percent in  
8 intra-city funds, 99.5 million or 8.43 percent in  
9 federal funds, and 12.5 million or about 1 percent in  
10 state funding. We are pleased that the Mayor's  
11 Executive Budget invests in an array of services for  
12 young people, including education, childcare, and  
13 cultural services, and adds funding for DYCD.

14           As we discussed in March, the Office of  
15 Neighborhood Safety, ONS, officially joined DYCD in  
16 Fiscal Year 2024. This Office includes the Mayor's  
17 Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, the Office to  
18 Prevent Gun Violence, Atlas, and related employment  
19 services. These programs are aligned with DYCD's  
20 mission and improves community police relations,  
21 reduce crime and incarceration, and diminish contact  
22 with the criminal justice system. The Executive  
23 Budget includes new and additional programming in  
24 ONS, including 15 million for a new workforce  
25 development program that will offer work readiness

1 and occupational training, internship and job  
2 placement to 500 New Yorkers age 18 to 40 who have  
3 been involved in the criminal justice system or  
4 impacted by community violence, 8.6 million for the  
5 Crisis Management System to continue support for Cure  
6 Violence services and mental health services in gun  
7 violence safety precincts, 2.5 million to support the  
8 Neighborhood Safety Alliance which fosters  
9 collaboration between communities, actors, law  
10 enforcement, agencies, and City services to reduce  
11 gun violence in six gun violence safety precincts.  
12

13           The launch of the Summer Youth Employment  
14 Program is in two months. DYCD and other providers  
15 have been busy at work to make it a successful year.  
16 The 2024 application for participants and worksites  
17 was released on January 22nd, making the earliest  
18 release to date. It underscores the commitment to  
19 program quality by providing participants ample time  
20 to prepare for their summer experience and allowing  
21 providers to work with the New York City business and  
22 non-profit community to develop additional worksite.  
23 We are grateful for the Council's support of early  
24 and baseline funding for SYEP, which made this  
25 possible. The application period closed on March 15th

1 with a record number of young people applying to the  
2 program. A significant portion of these applications  
3 resides in the six priority police precincts and  
4 targeted NYCHA development.  
5

6 DYCD organized targeted recruitment  
7 events in priority precincts with CMS groups,  
8 utilized New York City's public school communications  
9 channels for direct outreach to students and parents  
10 and coordinated special recruitment events at NYCHA  
11 developments and Cornerstone Community Centers. SYEP  
12 enrollment are currently underway and processing  
13 smoothly. We expect to be fully enrolled in the  
14 coming weeks. Enrolled young people are currently  
15 completing their work readiness training, including  
16 financial literacy, mindfulness, to prepare for their  
17 summer experience. All SYEP participants will receive  
18 at least two hours of financial literacy education.

19 DYCD also launched a financial  
20 empowerment peer mentoring pilot. SYEP participants  
21 who attend a CUNY College Now course on financial  
22 literacy will serve as peer mentors to youth in  
23 traditionally under-represented communities. We are  
24 expanding initiatives piloted in previous years. SYEP  
25 Pride, Credit Pilot, and pathways and serving more



1 youth in program slots set aside for youth with  
2 barriers to employment, residing in targeted  
3 precincts and public housing.  
4

5           We successfully completed this year's  
6 Work, Learn and Grow program, serving more than 7,000  
7 youth. Thanks to the Mayor and the Council for the  
8 major investment. Over one third of participants  
9 reside in our attended schools within the six  
10 priority precincts identified in the Mayor's  
11 Blueprint for Community Safety. We are on track to  
12 serve 100,000 young people and are working with our  
13 providers to develop a new and engaging work site  
14 that meets our young people's interests. We want to  
15 thank, of course, Chair Stevens for enlisting Council  
16 Members for the participants in SYEP to work and  
17 serve in their work site and their offices. We  
18 successfully this year with Work, Learn and Grow  
19 program and the Council support and the amount of  
20 participants, our staff and providers has also  
21 focused on another blueprint program, which is Summer  
22 Rising. We appreciate the constant feedback from the  
23 Council on how to make improvement and in particular  
24 from Chair Stevens and Joseph. Since February, DYCD  
25 has held and led biweekly Summer Rising convenings

1 for providers, sharing resources to support quality  
2 programming, offering peer support for best  
3 practices, clarifying policies and procedures with  
4 key personnel, including our partners at New York  
5 City Public Schools and offering professional  
6 development. The application portal was open March  
7 4th through March 25th for Summer Rising, earlier and  
8 longer than past years. We received 138,000  
9 applications demonstrating continued interest in  
10 summer programs. 110,000 families were offered  
11 placement in one of their application choices, which  
12 included 100 percent of students with a 12-month  
13 individual education program, an IEP, and 87 percent  
14 of all IEP applicants, 100 percent of students in  
15 temporary housing, 100 percent of students in foster  
16 care. Families can still sign up and join the waiting  
17 list for programs through  
18 [myschool@nycd.gov/summerrising](mailto:myschool@nycd.gov/summerrising).

19  
20 We also are pleased that on July 5th, we  
21 will open our 100th Cornerstone Program. After being  
22 closed for decades, the following significant capital  
23 investments and improvement, the Gowanus Houses  
24 Community Center will be re-opened as a Cornerstone  
25 Program with our senior partner, Grand Street

1 Settlement, as the providers. Re-opening the center  
2 was one of the top priorities for residents and was  
3 included as part of the Gowanus Neighborhood Rezoning  
4 process. We thank the Council for its strong advocacy  
5 to get the center open and for local residents who  
6 have assisted in provider selection and the planning  
7 process in developing programming.  
8

9 The 2025 Executive Budget places DYCD in  
10 a strong position to accomplish much in communities  
11 across the city. Thank you again for the opportunity  
12 to discuss the Executive Budget. We are pleased to  
13 answer your questions.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,  
15 Commissioner. I'm going to jump right into it.

16 You talked about the Office of  
17 Neighborhood Safety. As you noted, the Office of  
18 Neighborhood Safety Program was transferred from MOCJ  
19 to DYCD at the FY24 Adopted Budget, and this year,  
20 the Executive Plan includes 153.6 million in FY25 for  
21 the Office of Neighborhood Safety. Does the agency  
22 have enough funding to run the program?

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Currently, the  
24 agency has enough funding to run the Office of  
25 Neighborhood Safety.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And could you  
3 tell us what's the current headcount?

4 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: I just  
5 want to clarify, is that for that office or...

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, sorry, for  
7 ONS.

8 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: There's  
9 19 headcount.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How many  
11 vacancies?

12 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: About  
13 three or four.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, and could  
15 you give us an update on DYCD's first year managing  
16 the program?

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: The integration of  
18 ONS, the Office of Neighborhood Safety, into DYCD has  
19 been relatively successful and streamless. We've been  
20 working collaboratively with MOCJ, the Mayor's Office  
21 of Criminal Justice, to make sure that the transition  
22 goes well. We're currently in the process of vetting  
23 an executive director for that office.

24  
25

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Have you  
3 performed any real evaluations in that first year on  
4 how it's going?

5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We are in the  
6 process of discussing exactly procuring for a vendor  
7 to perform those evaluations.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I guess back in  
9 March, the actual headcount at ONS was 10, so you've  
10 hired nine more people since then?

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: We've  
12 gotten nine more headcount, yes.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What do you mean?  
14 You have nine more?

15 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: So we  
16 have 19 and we have three vacancies that I shared  
17 before so we don't have nine more people. We have  
18 nine more headcount.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So how many  
20 people work at ONS right now?

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: Right  
22 now we have...

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Good  
24 morning, Council Member.

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Good morning.

1  
2                   ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Chair  
3 Brannan. So back in March, we should have been at 18  
4 and if I... I need to look at the testimony but, if I  
5 said 10 by mistake, I apologize for that. It was  
6 definitely 18 and, since, we added on one more  
7 headcount, and we have three or four vacancies.

8                   CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Obviously, you'd  
9 love to be fully staffed up, but are you good with  
10 that amount? I mean, you could always use more, are  
11 you asking for more?

12                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We are currently  
13 okay with that.

14                   CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I believe I  
15 mentioned before the Council called upon the  
16 Administration to restore 44.4 million dollars in  
17 cuts to DYCD programs from the November and  
18 Preliminary Plan in our budget response. The cuts  
19 that we called to be restored were a lot of the  
20 things that you just mentioned, including the  
21 baseline reductions to some of DYCD's most utilized  
22 programs, such as COMPASS, ONS, Summer Rising. Why  
23 was the funding for the restoration of these programs  
24 not included in the Executive Budget?

25

1  
2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Good  
3 morning, Chair Brannan.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Good morning.

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Hi. As  
6 you know, the City is in an interesting fiscal  
7 climate. We are in ongoing conversations with OMB  
8 but, at this time, they have not put those funds back  
9 in our budget.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What evaluation  
11 does DYCD do to determine which programs to cut, so  
12 when OMB comes to you and says you have to do a PEG,  
13 how do you pick?

14 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So we had the same  
15 question in March, and I think any Commissioner, of  
16 course, we don't like PEGs, and it's one of the, in  
17 terms of a management, it's one of the conditions of  
18 making sure that the City remains in a fiscal  
19 situation and, as you know, back then in a certain  
20 place in time, the way that the fiscal crisis was, we  
21 had no other choice but to have a PEG aligned with  
22 all of our other City agencies so we don't like  
23 selecting or reviewing and seeing exactly where we  
24 would cut at. That's not something that we enjoy, but  
25 I'm good to, and understand that with the Mayor and

1 Council and a lot of other stakeholders reviewing the  
2 budget and fiscal condition of the City, we're not  
3 where we were before.

4  
5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Do you have a  
6 sense of how many youth participants were impacted by  
7 the reductions in that funding?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Hi, Chair  
9 Brannan. Can you be specific about what initiative  
10 you're referring to?

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I mean, you could  
12 pick one, or you could talk about COMPASS or ONS or  
13 Summer Rising.

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Well,  
15 primarily the reductions as far as service reductions  
16 was primarily in our afterschool portfolio, and that  
17 would be around the contract changes and that was due  
18 usually for low utilization. There was a program  
19 elimination, and that was the Explorer program, and  
20 then there was a Summer Rising hours reduction, so  
21 the Summer Rising hours reduction was at a slot  
22 reduction. That was just to change the program model  
23 but, when we're referencing the slot reduction, the  
24 baseline for FY25, the reduction would be 109 slots.



1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: 109 slots in  
3 which program?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: That is  
5 for the COMPASS area, and that's where the contract  
6 changes, and that reduction is about 109 slots.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: So just  
9 to be full, there's also the SONYC slot loss, and  
10 that was about 1,300 slots, and then the Explorer  
11 program was a reduction of about 2,100 slots so in  
12 total, we're talking about 3,500 slots.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So because of  
14 these unnecessary cuts, what was it, 3,500 kids?

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: 3,500, a  
16 little over 3,500, but just even number, 3,500 slots  
17 over a system of over 100,000 slots so we are a very  
18 vast system. As the Commissioner mentioned, PEGs are  
19 not something that the City wants to do. We all have  
20 charges and directives, and so we were determining  
21 what is the least way to have an impact to our  
22 program, so where we could, we did revenue swaps to  
23 maximize different funding streams. We looked at  
24 programs that had lower utilization. We thought about  
25 programs that had more comprehensive services to keep

1 them whole so we really wanted to be intentional  
2 about how we approached reductions to our program  
3 budget. At no point and at no way are we saying this  
4 is reflective of the programs that served, but we  
5 were given a task, and so we wanted to make sure that  
6 we kind of met our target where we try to minimize  
7 the impact of services.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah. Yeah, look,  
10 the Council maintains it's just unfortunate you even  
11 had to go through this exercise. It was never  
12 necessary in the first place and, as you're pointing  
13 out, it had real-world impacts.

14 Let's talk about adult literacy. Adult  
15 Literacy Coalition is calling for the Administration  
16 to include an additional 10 million to the DYCD Adult  
17 Literacy (INAUDIBLE) the current FY25 prelim funding  
18 level of 21.7 million dollars, which will address the  
19 funding issue in the RFP. The Executive Plan, once  
20 again, does not recognize any additional funding for  
21 the adult literacy program. The Council called on the  
22 Administration in our budget response to provide an  
23 additional 10 million. The additional 10 million  
24 would restore some of the 16-million reduction in the  
25 new RFP. Could you talk about why that funding wasn't

1 included in the Executive Budget and why wasn't that  
2 prioritized?  
3

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Hi. So I  
5 wouldn't necessarily say it wasn't prioritized. I  
6 don't think that's the approach that we take  
7 regarding our budget. At this time, though, it wasn't  
8 included in the (INAUDIBLE) budget, but I will,  
9 again, reference that our price per participant did  
10 increase in the new RFP and in our new program model  
11 to 1,300, but there's been no additional funding  
12 that's been added to our budget regarding the adult  
13 literacy portfolio.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So in the prelim  
15 hearing, you'd mentioned that there were technical  
16 adjustments that had to take place to correct the  
17 adult literacy budget. What's the corrected budget  
18 for that program?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Well, the  
20 budget still remains the same, but I know that  
21 there's a variance of about a little over 1 million,  
22 1 to 2 million, and that doesn't mean that there's  
23 been a reduction to the RFP that's on the street. It  
24 just means that we still have to do one minor  
25 technical adjustment so I know that I mentioned in

1 the last hearing that we would have it done by Exec,  
2 but we still have one more minor technical adjustment  
3 to do because the funding isn't reflected in another  
4 program area.

5  
6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the  
7 current headcount?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: For?

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Adult literacy.

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: One  
11 second. I am going to say roughly five, but I'm going  
12 to defer to our Deputy Commissioner for our community  
13 development to make sure he gives you the more  
14 accurate reflection of the unit.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you  
16 for the question. Nine staff.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Nine?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Yes.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And are they all  
20 filled, are all of the positions filled?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Yes, they're  
22 full.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Since the  
24 spring of 2022, over 177,000 asylum seekers have  
25 arrived here in New York City. Even before this

1  
2 influx of primarily non-English speakers, the City  
3 did not adequately fund DYCD's adult literacy  
4 programs. Speak a little bit more about how DYCD is  
5 proposing to address the needs of adult New Yorkers  
6 and asylum seekers.

7           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Some of the programs  
8 that Deputy Commissioner Bobbitt is going to talk  
9 about is the programs that we have at the HERRC, but  
10 I'll let Mike expand on that.

11           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner. Thank you for the question. In addition  
13 to providing the baseline literacy services, as the  
14 Commissioner points out, we've been supporting  
15 English as a second language at the HERRC, the  
16 Emergency Relocation Humanitarian Centers. We've  
17 provided those services at five centers in the prior  
18 year and currently provide services at six sites.

19           CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So you're only  
20 providing it at the HERRCs because I know there's a  
21 bunch of different sites, or is it...

22           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: The  
23 expansion I'm referring to is at the HERRCs, but all  
24 of our current investments can receive New Yorkers,  
25 including asylum seekers. There's no restriction.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We've also been joined by Council Members Brewer and Avilés, and now I'm going to hand it over to my Co-Chair, Council Member Stevens.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Hi, good afternoon. I'll jump right into it because I have a lot of questions as you guys know.

DYCD's Executive Plan includes three new needs, totaling 28 million dollars in Fiscal 2025, 42.4 million in Fiscal 2026, 54.5 million in Fiscal 2027, and 66.5 million in Fiscal 2028. Were there any other new needs requested that DYCD made that did not get included in the Executive Budget?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: No, but we are still assessing our needs in the agency and have ongoing conversations with OMB so I wouldn't say that it's reflective of everything, but most of our needs have been addressed.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I don't know if all of them have been addressed, but I'll let it go.

The Job Connect program, the Executive Budget included an additional 16.9 million of City funding in Fiscal 2025, which is associated with the headcount increase of 28, increasing to the

1 additional 55.4 million with the increased headcount  
2 of 30 in Fiscal 2028. What is the start date for the  
3 new Job Connect program, and was there an evaluation  
4 of the Job Connect program? If so, what is the  
5 indication of success for this program?  
6

7 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Your latter question  
8 was, was there an evaluation of the...

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You know, I love  
10 an evaluation because I know this was a program that  
11 was moved over, correct?

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes, it was.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, and so  
14 that's my question. So I guess I'll break it down. So  
15 we will start with what is the start date for the new  
16 jobs? When does it start?

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're looking to  
18 land that program in the new Fiscal Year.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So what's the  
20 start?

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: New fiscal year  
22 starts in July.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So it's going to  
24 start in July or is it going to (INAUDIBLE) after?  
25

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're looking to  
3 land it in July.

4                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: In July? All  
5 right, so July 1. All right, great.

6                   Again, this is a program that was in  
7 another agency until it was moved over, and so my  
8 question is like, what was the evaluation process and  
9 what are some of the indications of success that this  
10 is a program that's worthy of like expanding and  
11 continuing so would love to hear what that process  
12 looks like with this transition.

13                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm going to call  
14 Associate Commissioner Daphne Montanez, but what I  
15 will say is that the program when it was over at the  
16 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, MOCJ, as you can  
17 recall, it was a pilot program so...

18                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And in pilot  
19 programs we should have evaluations done as we're  
20 expanding it because that's the whole point of the  
21 pilot, right? So we could see if it's working before  
22 we expand and roll...

23                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Absolutely.

24                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It out so I would  
25 love to hear what the evaluation was like and was it



1 conducted by you guys or was it conducted by MOCJ? I  
2 guess the other question.  
3

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, there's a  
5 joint effort between the two agencies to do an  
6 evaluation of when it was at MOCJ and how it  
7 transferred over to DYCD. We're in constant  
8 communication and our teams are working  
9 collaboratively together to make sure that the  
10 evaluation lands before the end of the contract or a  
11 little bit into the end of the contract. The contract  
12 expiration, as you know, is June 30th at the end of  
13 the Fiscal Year. Now, what we've noticed about the  
14 program is that there was a targeted population of  
15 young adults age 25 to 35 that was under-represented  
16 in the program. The program also needed to be  
17 expanded in terms of more subcontractors, new  
18 industries, and also some other services as well.  
19 I'll let Commissioner Montanez talk about it first.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm sorry,  
21 Commissioner, before you go...

22 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Sure.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because there was  
24 a couple, I'm just going to raise a red flag because  
25 if the start date for the program is July 1...

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I said the targeted  
3 date is July.

4                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, the  
5 targeted date is July 1 and the evaluation won't be  
6 done until June, that don't make sense.

7                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, the contract  
8 ends in June.

9                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, I know when  
10 it ends, but if it's going to start the next day,  
11 what are we doing?

12                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're not doing  
13 anything. We are making sure that there's a  
14 continuity..

15                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I wanted to have  
16 a good hearing today.

17                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: There's a continuity  
18 of service. That's the most important thing. The most  
19 important thing is that there's a continuity of  
20 services, and that's what we're making sure to  
21 ensure.

22                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Go ahead, Deputy  
23 Commissioner, please.

24                   DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Good  
25 afternoon, Chair. Thank you.

1  
2           Just following up on the Commissioner's  
3 remarks regarding the new program, the Precision  
4 Employment Program was transferred to us at the start  
5 of the Fiscal Year and was launched in the previous  
6 Administration as a pilot, and it is ending at the  
7 end...

8           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So he just said  
9 that, so can we just talk about the evaluation  
10 because I think that that's the piece, and this is  
11 something not just with DYCD. This is what we do all  
12 the time. We have these pilot programs and then we're  
13 not evaluating them before we expand it. That just  
14 does not make sense and so, for me, we don't have to  
15 wait for the program to end to do consistent  
16 evaluations and so I'm just trying to figure out has  
17 there been done? What are the indications of success  
18 that we should be expanding this program? Like that's  
19 where I want to talk about so he kind of already  
20 talked about that so can we talk about the evaluation  
21 process?

22           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So the evaluation  
23 process is collaboratively being discussed and worked  
24 on between MOCJ and DYCD.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So how do we know  
3 the program was successful?

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We don't know until  
5 we get an evaluation so that's the whole point.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So there was no  
7 evaluation plan yet? Got it.

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Because you can't  
9 look at what was happening in the COVID days when  
10 this program actually originated in MOCJ..

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So shouldn't we  
12 be expanding the pilot then?

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And as it expanded  
14 all over to DYCD, so we want to make sure we get a  
15 full scope..

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: (INAUDIBLE) We're  
17 cutting money in other programs that we know we have  
18 evaluations for, and now we have a new program that  
19 we don't have data to show that it's successful and  
20 we're expanding.

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, we know..

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So that's why  
23 things like this stresses me out because that does  
24 not make sense.

1  
2           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, I try not to  
3 stress you out, but we know for a fact that there was  
4 a targeted population of 25 to 35 young adults who  
5 were under-served in the program and then there were  
6 some other items that we wanted to make sure that  
7 with this expanded program, we actually land on. What  
8 are those additional items?

9           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes, so the  
10 evaluation continues but, since we inherited the  
11 program, we have been evaluating the program,  
12 conducting site visits.

13           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So in those  
14 evaluations that you've done, what are the  
15 indications of success? Because you just said you  
16 have been evaluating them. What does that look like?  
17 What have you guys been seeing? Because I just want  
18 us to make sure that when we're expanding on programs  
19 and moving it from a pilot and you just said you guys  
20 are doing ongoing evaluations, what does that look  
21 like?

22           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes, so  
23 some of the indicators that we've seen and  
24 opportunities that we're looking to grow in our new  
25 program include paid trainings and internships

1 throughout the course of the period of service, and  
2 that has actually led to higher retention rates, and  
3 we're looking to continue that in the new program  
4 starting next year. We also know that the core group  
5 or age range has been anywhere from 25 to 35 years of  
6 age, and there has traditionally been a gap of  
7 services in terms of providing wraparound  
8 comprehensive workforce development programs so, in  
9 our new program, we will target individuals 18 to 40  
10 years of age, and we will offer a variety of in-  
11 demand sector-based trainings that will cover a  
12 variety of industries because the current program  
13 focuses solely on construction and HVAC. We will  
14 continue that as an option, but we also want to  
15 diversify the trainings that will include other  
16 industries such as healthcare, technology, culinary,  
17 arts, and also we do see a need for this population  
18 to provide wraparound comprehensive supportive  
19 services and mental health services. The target  
20 population for the new program will be justice-  
21 involved individuals and individuals from communities  
22 who experience high rates of community violence so we  
23 know that mental health services and providing  
24 trauma-informed care will also be a very important  
25

1  
2 element of the program, and ultimately the outcome  
3 that we're looking for is permanent job placements in  
4 in-demand sectors in New York City.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many slots  
6 will be available under the Job Connect program?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: In Fiscal  
8 Year '25, we will serve 500 participants and then  
9 scale up over four years to ultimately reach 2,000  
10 young people. Excuse me.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I mean, they're  
12 not young people at that point.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Not young,  
14 exactly. 18 to 40 year olds.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have like  
16 a breakdown of what that will look like throughout  
17 the boroughs?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: In a few  
19 weeks, we will release a solicitation. Our goal is to  
20 have programs in every borough offering trainings and  
21 providing a variety of sector-based occupational  
22 trainings, and that was also learning from the  
23 current Precision Employment Program. They currently  
24 have two sites in Brooklyn and the Bronx, and we want  
25

1 to ensure that there are services across all five  
2 boroughs of New York City.

3  
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because I know  
5 there was a gap in Queens and so is that going to be  
6 prioritized this go around?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is there an  
9 increase in overall headcount or is this a transfer  
10 of headcount for the Precision Employment Program?

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: This is  
12 an actual increase in headcount that we've been given  
13 to operate this program.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.  
15 Neighborhood Safety Alliance. The Executive Plan  
16 includes additional 2.5 million of City funding in  
17 Fiscal 2025 in the outer years of the Neighborhood  
18 Safety Alliance. How does this program differ from  
19 the Neighborhood Safety?

20 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're going to have  
21 Mike Bobbitt, Deputy Commissioner, address that.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you  
23 for the question. The Neighborhood Safety Councils  
24 will work cooperatively with the Gun Violence  
25 Prevention Task Force in the targeted precincts so



1 this is a holistic, collaborative strategy to enlist  
2 community support, elected officials, business  
3 community, faith-based community non-profit providers  
4 to help hold those entities accountable and also to  
5 devise, implement, and carry out neighborhood safety  
6 strategies to help the neighborhoods thrive so it's a  
7 new companion strategy that's being developed.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many  
10 precincts will this program roll out in, and did this  
11 already start?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: It didn't  
13 already start. We're in the procurement process, and  
14 they're anticipated to start shortly, underway at the  
15 start of FY25. There'll be six Councils targeting the  
16 six precincts, which the Commissioner referenced  
17 earlier under other testimony where we're highest  
18 incidents of gun violence.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you have those  
20 six precincts?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Hold on a  
22 second.

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes, the precincts  
24 are the 40, the 42, 44, 47, 73 and 75.

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So just so we're  
3 clear, two of those are in my District so hopefully  
4 I'll be included in some of those conversations. I  
5 know you said elected officials because they were  
6 having some meetings before they called me the day  
7 of.

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Absolutely.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many  
10 providers are involved with the program and, with the  
11 expansion, how many additional providers will be  
12 involved?

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're still talking  
14 about the Neighborhood Safety Council?

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: There'll be  
17 six Chairs which will be identified through the  
18 procurement that will serve as a coordinating body,  
19 but they could enlist innumerable numbers of partners  
20 in the interest of promoting safety in the community.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: At the program  
22 budget hearing, you testified regarding the  
23 initiation of the youth team support program for  
24 youth under 18 funded by New York State Office of  
25 Children and Family Services and, in the Executive

1 Budget, 2.3 million was added to the Fiscal 2024 and  
2 1.4 million in Fiscal 2025 for the program. How many  
3 providers have submitted applications for this  
4 program?  
5

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: I don't  
7 have the unique count of providers, but I can give  
8 you on both phases how many proposals we got in. For  
9 Phase One, which were the amendment mechanism, we got  
10 in 298 proposals and, for the current (INAUDIBLE)  
11 solicitation that we're doing, we got in over 200.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many  
13 providers have been chosen to service this program?

14 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So currently we're  
15 doing awards and we're still doing a proposal  
16 evaluation.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Some providers  
18 got it already, correct?

19 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm sorry? Some  
20 providers got awards?

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Some providers got  
22 awards, but we're still doing program proposal  
23 evaluations.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So how many did  
25 get awards so far?

1  
2           ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: For the  
3 amendments, we gave out 47 allocations of the  
4 funding.

5           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I'm sure you  
6 don't have it now, but if afterwards, followup, if  
7 you could send me a list of the providers that got  
8 it?

9           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes, we definitely  
10 will.

11           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What are the  
12 requirements and qualifications for the providers to  
13 run this program? There's a number of questions so  
14 you could just sit here.

15           ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: They have  
16 to propose a neighborhood league or sports program  
17 that's competitive and includes young people, young  
18 adults under the age of 18 from that neighborhood. It  
19 shouldn't be a complete add-on to the existing  
20 program so, if they have an existing afterschool  
21 program, it shouldn't just include those young  
22 people, young adults. It should be for that  
23 neighborhood, per se. We've gotten some really  
24 creative proposals and some that we'll send you, like  
25 we have a swimming program up in the Northeast Bronx.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You said swing?

3 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Swimming.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I thought you  
5 said... I was going to say, wait, what?

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Swimming  
7 program in the Northeast Bronx in addition to some  
8 really creative opportunities for young adults to  
9 come together, be coached so it's not just sports,  
10 but it's also kind of a mentoring engagement  
11 leadership program as well so we're working with  
12 those providers now and, to the Commissioner's point,  
13 we are reading the proposals that came in for the  
14 providers that we don't have major funding with.

15 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And the definition  
16 of sports is more than two people.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: That's  
18 correct, so that engagement of sports should be more  
19 than two people. It should be some type of  
20 competitive play. The other piece, it shouldn't fund  
21 professionalized leagues so AAU, those sort of  
22 professional kind of "professional leagues" that  
23 travel, it shouldn't fund that. It should be more of  
24 an amateur local activation.

25

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is this program  
3 an opportunity, because I know you said that it can't  
4 just be an add-on, so could non-existing DYCD folks  
5 apply for this as well?

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That's the other  
7 part of the program, which is the competitive  
8 application.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I know we  
10 spoke about this. I would love to see a Double Dutch  
11 program because we need to bring that back as a lost  
12 art.

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We definitely heard  
14 you on that.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Don't do that.

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, we heard you.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Because you got  
18 your basketball.

19 The YTS program is scheduled to begin  
20 July 1, 2024. Does the agency feel that it can meet  
21 this deadline, and what are the locations, oroughs,  
22 and districts for this program? That's the same  
23 program. I told you don't go anywhere; I have like  
24 five more questions.

1  
2           ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: I'm  
3 sorry, Chair Steven. Can you repeat that question?  
4 Because you said YTS, you threw me off for a second.

5           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Oh, I'm sorry.  
6 Well, that's what they have here. The YTS program is  
7 scheduled to start July 1. Does the agency feels that  
8 they can meet this deadline so it's scheduled to  
9 start July 1.

10           ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Okay,  
11 great question. So absolutely. So we have staff who  
12 are reading those proposals that came in. We're  
13 rating them and, yeah, we look forward to completing  
14 that process in time to alert those providers who  
15 actually received those awards so they can start up  
16 in July.

17           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so you  
18 probably don't have it here, but if you could follow  
19 up with like the breakdowns for the boroughs and like  
20 what districts they're in, that'll be really helpful.

21           ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY:  
22 Absolutely. I believe for those that are being rated  
23 right now, the most immediate followup will be at the  
24 point of award. We can let you know where those were  
25 awarded.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's fine.

3 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So not only you, but  
4 the rest of the council as well.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, absolutely.  
6 Me, we all the same.

7 What are the days and times that you are  
8 supposed to attend? Is there like a set schedule or  
9 is it more up to the provider to kind of create that?

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Great  
11 question. It allows providers the flexibility to  
12 shape that program to meet the needs of the community  
13 so it could be on the weekends, it could be in the  
14 evenings. Once they're awarded, we work with them  
15 closely just to ensure that that schedule makes  
16 sense, but it can cover the weekends and evenings as  
17 well of course.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is this part of  
19 your portfolio?

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Yes, it  
21 is.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Here we go. Is  
23 this in partnership with NYPD and Saturday Night  
24 Lights as well? You know, my favorite program.

25



1  
2 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: What's your  
3 question?

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Is this program  
5 connected to Saturday Night Lights, and is it also a  
6 partnership with NYPD as well?

7 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So this is an  
8 independent program outside of Saturday Night Lights.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay. You know  
10 how much I love that program. Were there sports  
11 offered that are dedicated specifically for females?

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're still reading  
13 the proposals. We'll have a better sense after we  
14 finish the completion of the proposal to..

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Was that like an  
16 ask as well to make sure that we have a diverse set  
17 of programs for young girls as well?

18 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, that's more of  
19 an internal policy but, when it came to the  
20 requirements for what the state grant was, the  
21 requirements, gender was not a specific criteria.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I don't want to  
23 see 100 new programs and we got one program for girls  
24 because we know that sometimes that be happening,  
25 especially with these (INAUDIBLE)

1  
2           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, I just want to  
3 add that the Mayor is very, very in tune with his  
4 Women Forward and Her Future campaign so all City  
5 agencies are required to make sure that we build it  
6 out and build out the investment for..

7           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But I can also  
8 hear you coming back to me in a couple of weeks being  
9 like, well, those are the only proposals we got so  
10 this is what we had to do so, you know, just want to  
11 make sure that that is something that we're promoting  
12 as well.

13           Will there be opportunity for sports to  
14 offer young people with disabilities?

15           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, we're  
16 reviewing what is being submitted.

17           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And is that  
18 something we're prioritizing as well?

19           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That is definitely  
20 something that we have our eyes on to make sure that  
21 the sports programming is inclusive.

22           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Since this is a  
23 new program, has the agency been getting the word out  
24 to the youth that this will, like, what has the  
25 recruitment been, and I know that you announced it at

1 the budget hearing but, even as we're gearing up, do  
2 we have a plan around how we're going to get the word  
3 out to neighborhoods and to the young people that  
4 it's supposed to serve?

5  
6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're doing two sort  
7 of approaches. We're, of course, with DYCD on social  
8 media and targeted marketing. We're also requiring  
9 our providers who will get awards to make sure that  
10 they also highly recruit as well.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you believe  
12 the funding is sufficient to run these programs?

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Absolutely.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Of course, you're  
15 going to say that, and then I'll be like no one got  
16 enough money.

17 The Council called upon the  
18 Administration to restore 44.4 million in cuts to the  
19 Department of Youth and Community Development  
20 programs from the November and Preliminary Plan in  
21 our Preliminary Budget response. Cuts we called on to  
22 restore include the baseline reductions to some of  
23 the Department's most utilized programs, such as  
24 COMPASS, the Office of Neighborhood Safety, and  
25 Summer Rising. In its response, the Council called

1 the Administration to increase investments in DYCD  
2 programs that provided leadership, social, and  
3 workforce development tools for young people. Can you  
4 list some current programs that provided those skills  
5 and the number of participants in each of them?  
6

7 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: You mentioned  
8 COMPASS, SONYC, and what other programs? I'm sorry.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: It's okay,  
10 because it was a lot. COMPASS, SONYC, Office of  
11 Neighborhood Safety, Summer Rising.

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: All right, Susan.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Hi, Chair  
14 Stevens.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hi.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: You were  
17 asking something about the, can you repeat that  
18 question about the programs? Something about the  
19 activities in the program?

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. In the  
21 budget response, we called for these investments  
22 that, you know, the programs we were calling for to  
23 invest in, but some of those investments weren't put  
24 back so we're just asking, since those programs  
25 weren't put back, are there other programs that's

1 going to replace some of those skills, like  
2 leadership, social and emotional work, workforce  
3 development tools since some of the things that we  
4 asked for in the budget response, so kind of talk  
5 about some of the other programs that you're offering  
6 in response to some of the things that's been cut.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think  
9 that's a great question, and I think my Colleague,  
10 Navita, put that into good perspective when she noted  
11 that although we're not happy to be making any  
12 reductions to program areas, it was a small portion  
13 of a much larger COMPASS portfolio with hundreds of  
14 programs for elementary, hundreds of programs for  
15 middle, with high, with our Cornerstones and Beacons  
16 so with the modest impact here we're hopeful that all  
17 young people who otherwise would have been served in  
18 these seats can be served in our portfolio in  
19 general.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Don't  
21 go anywhere because we still got questions for you  
22 because we're going to move on to homeless and  
23 runaway youth. Everyone know my favorite topics, and  
24 one of the things that, it's one of my main  
25 existence, because none of these things were

1 addressed in the Executive Budget. The Council Fiscal  
2 2025 Preliminary Budget Response included a call for  
3 6.2-million baseline increase in RHY and to fund 100  
4 additional beds for runaway and homeless youth and  
5 young adults. I'm never going to stop until we get  
6 these beds, I promise. This includes a request of  
7 restoration of 1.6 million for runaway and homeless  
8 youth, housing navigators, a total of 1.6 million for  
9 youth, peer navigators and drop-in centers, an  
10 increase for the current DYCD funded crisis and  
11 transitional independent living program contracted to  
12 55 for a total of 5.5 million. The Executive Budget  
13 did not address those items and does not include any  
14 additional funding for runaway and homeless youth,  
15 and it's really disappointing and it's kind of  
16 heartbreaking, especially talking to providers just  
17 around how they're seeing such a huge increase. I was  
18 talking to a provider yesterday as I was coming into  
19 City Hall, and I see them here, and so hopefully  
20 they'll be testifying later just around how they've  
21 been playing semantics with outside funding to make  
22 sure that they're still able to serve the influx of  
23 young people that they are seeing coming into the  
24 drop-in centers and seeing coming in and so, even  
25

1  
2 when we're talking about the numbers, they're saying  
3 that it is not necessarily being reported correctly  
4 because they're using other funding so I'm really  
5 just kind of sad and that this has not been taken on  
6 as a priority, especially when there's so many  
7 investments going on with a lot of other programs. I  
8 think that this is something that could also be  
9 preventing future things, but I'll get to the  
10 questioning and get off my soapbox, but to what  
11 extent did DYCD advocate to the Administration for  
12 additional resources for runaway and homeless youth  
13 funding as called by the Council in our budget  
14 response?

15                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're still on  
16 ongoing conversations with our partners over at OMB  
17 to look at the runaway and homeless youth program  
18 but, as you and I had discussed in March, the  
19 overwhelming amount of asylum and migrants that have  
20 gone through the system, I believe we're at 191,000,  
21 just over-rode not only DYCD and in this small part  
22 that we play, but the whole system in general, so  
23 those communications and those conversations, OMB is  
24 a constant, and they understand exactly the situation

1  
2 that our program is in, but they also understand how  
3 overwhelmed the system is as well.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I think we're  
5 agreeing on, and I think you play a bigger part than  
6 you're building up, like you're not playing a small  
7 part, right, because we're not only just dealing with  
8 the influx of young people and asylum seekers, but we  
9 have an influx of just young people in general so I  
10 think you do play a huge part and sometimes it, for  
11 me, feels like that is being forgotten.

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: But I also think  
13 that we both agree that it's a federal government  
14 problem.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Absolutely.

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And that we need...

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: On the same page.

18 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We need to advocate  
19 with the federal government because it's a policy  
20 issue...

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All the things  
22 that exist.

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That's affecting all  
24 the cities.



1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: On the same page,  
3 absolutely a problem, but the kids are here, and so  
4 what are we going to do?

5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yep.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: How many peer  
7 navigators are currently servicing the drop-in  
8 centers?

9 Don't all answer at the same time.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: At this  
11 time, peer navigators are not funded for current  
12 Fiscal Year.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, that's why  
14 you don't want to answer is because we know that it's  
15 such a useful tool and we all knew that it was  
16 working so well, and so this really breaks my heart.  
17 I'm not going to lie. Without funding, how does DYCD  
18 plan to address issues like the needs for beds to  
19 shelter homeless runaway youth because it is  
20 increasing and there is no funding that's being added  
21 so, without this, what is the expectation around  
22 providers?

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, it's still  
24 those engagement with OMB to...

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So we should go  
3 storm the castle?

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, we just need to  
5 continue to stress to OMB...

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right, I  
7 heard storm the castle. I'm leaving here and going  
8 straight there.

9 But no, seriously, I think that this is  
10 something we definitely have to keep fighting and  
11 pushing for because I do know your team has been  
12 fighting and want this as well, and you guys are in a  
13 very difficult situation because you're given a  
14 budget and you have to provide the service and so I  
15 don't want to downplay that piece. I do know that you  
16 guys are working really hard to fight, but this is  
17 something that I think that we have to prioritize  
18 with all the other things that we're prioritizing  
19 because this is something I've been fighting for the  
20 for last two years and there hasn't been much  
21 movement, and it's only exasperating and, like I  
22 said, I was talking to providers yesterday and I was  
23 just kind of heartbroken and to even be, to know that  
24 they're trying and doing all the things and you guys  
25 know too because you talk to them regularly. Just

1 want to make sure that we're continuously  
2 highlighting and pushing on this together.

3  
4 In the City Council budget response, we  
5 called for an increase to 55 for the current DYCD  
6 funded crisis and transitional independent living,  
7 TIL, program contracts. What is the greatest impact  
8 will the increased contract rate have on the  
9 organization's current providing services?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I'm  
11 sorry, Chair Stevens. Are you saying there was an  
12 increased rate to the TIL program?

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I think we were  
14 asking in the budget response, that's what we were  
15 asking for, for an increase.

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Okay, so  
17 at this point, we have not received that funding, but  
18 we have it in the budget response and we'll have that  
19 included in our conversations with OMB.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I have a number  
21 of other questions, but I'm going to pause here to  
22 give my Colleagues some time to ask questions and  
23 then I'll come back.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have questions  
25 from Council Member Louis followed by Williams.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.  
3 It's good to see you, Commissioner, and your team.  
4 All right, I got a couple of questions. Some Chair  
5 Stevens highlighted earlier.

6 Intro. 54 took place in July 11, 2023,  
7 and would require DYCD to include financial literacy  
8 training as part of all youth employment programs for  
9 runaway and homeless youth. In your testimony, you  
10 mentioned SYEP Pride, Credit Pilot, CUNY College Now  
11 Peer Mentoring so I wanted to know are all of these  
12 programs in response to Intro. 54, how much funding  
13 will you be asking for these programs in FY25, like  
14 how much will be allocated to each, how many people  
15 have attended the financial literacy training this  
16 Fiscal Year, does DYCD have any evaluations from  
17 those that attended the course, and how many youth  
18 who received training have been able to find  
19 employment? In addition to that, if you could please  
20 define under banked communities, because that was  
21 stated in the testimony. My last question is on Cure  
22 Violence, and Chair Stevens highlighted it earlier  
23 regarding Cure Violence so I just wanted to know,  
24 Commissioner, if you and your team could share with  
25 us if DYCD budgeted for increased oversight to ensure

1 that all contractors and providers both have  
2 resources and are using them adequately to respond to  
3 incidents of violence and other community programs. I  
4 know that was a lot of questions. I could restate  
5 anything you need.  
6

7 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Definitely a lot of  
8 questions. Let's try to bucket.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Let's start with  
10 Intro. 54.

11 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I believe I was  
12 present with you when we signed the legislation, but  
13 the financial literacy investment, just targeting  
14 SYEP for the minute, that has been a two-year..

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: You're talking  
16 about SYEP Pride?

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm talking about  
18 SYEP General. Everyone who goes to SYEP, regardless  
19 of exactly what the subset is, they get financial  
20 literacy, so that's been ongoing for the past, I  
21 think, two summers?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes. Since  
23 2022, we instituted, as part of our work readiness  
24 training, a minimum of two hours of financial  
25 literacy training as part of every SYEP participant's

1 work readiness, and so that is a requirement to  
2 complete in order to be placed in SYEP.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: We're familiar with  
5 that, but the criteria of the bill states runaway,  
6 homeless, so how are you tracking that within  
7 whatever is required already?

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, we're going  
9 to bucket that so we're talking about SYEP for the  
10 minute.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So SYEP definitely  
13 has integrated financial literacy in its program  
14 model.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Susan Haskell, the  
17 Deputy Commissioner, can talk about runaway and  
18 homeless youth and how financial literacy was in a  
19 partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs  
20 and Workers Protection, how it was also integrated in  
21 our RHY program as well, and then you asked about  
22 program evaluation...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So let's break that  
24 down. You brought up SYEP. Of all the participants,  
25 how many were trained to financial literacy over just

1 the fiscal year, one fiscal year. Let's talk FY23,  
2 FY24.

3  
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: So last  
5 year, SYEP enrolled 95,563 participants and, as a  
6 requirement of the program, every one of those  
7 participants received financial literacy training.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay, got that.  
9 Now, of those participants, how many fall within the  
10 criteria of Intro. 54?

11 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, excuse our  
12 vagueness...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: But we're kind of at  
15 a loss on exactly the criteria in the Intro. bill  
16 that you talked about.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I'm going to  
18 restate it differently. Let's move on to the next  
19 part. I understand why you have to be vague, but you  
20 don't have to be vague but I understand.

21 SYEP Pride, Credit Pilot, and CUNY  
22 College Now Peer Mentoring, does that all now fall  
23 under the criteria of Intro. 54? Is that part of the  
24 financial literacy training? It's just SYEP?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: These are  
3 offerings through SYEP. The peer mentoring program  
4 that we are launching this year is a brand new pilot  
5 where 15 participants who are part of Work, Learn and  
6 Grow went through a CUNY College Now course on  
7 banking and financial literacy and, this summer,  
8 they're going to be delivering workshops and  
9 presentations and having one-on-one peer-to-peer  
10 counseling sessions with SYEP participants, primarily  
11 within our special initiatives options.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And how many of  
13 those that are...

14 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm sorry.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Go ahead. Sorry.

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I want to make sure  
17 that, and I'm hearing your question and it's very  
18 specific, we're going to have to look and review the  
19 Intro. law to see exactly how we're in compliance,  
20 and that's something we're going to have to get back  
21 to you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yeah, because it's  
23 very explicit.

24 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yeah, that's why I  
25 don't want to go out and say it fits the criteria of



1 the law. I want us to go back, take a look at it, and  
2 then report back to you.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. I just  
5 wanted to know from the, I guess, students that are  
6 matriculating that will graduate from CUNY College  
7 Now, how many new peer mentors will you have on board  
8 for FY25 to support the new group of students?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: This pilot,  
10 we're starting small with 15 young people as part of  
11 that cohort.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you for that.  
13 The last question was in regards to DYCD budgeting  
14 for increased oversight to ensure that all  
15 contractors and providers both have the resources and  
16 they're using them adequately to respond to incidents  
17 of violence and other community programs. This is  
18 based off of one of the questions that Chair Stevens  
19 mentioned earlier. I want to know how you guys are  
20 keeping track of that, especially in FY25 if they'll  
21 need enhanced funding.

22 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: With the Mayor in  
23 awarding the CMS system, I believe the investment was  
24 86 million dollars and, as we have informed Chair  
25

1  
2 Stevens, that the CMS system is the evaluation, it's  
3 still the provider is still being procured.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: How is DYCD  
5 increasing oversight?

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I'm sorry. I'm not  
7 clear when you said oversight. The oversight pertains  
8 to the 86-million-dollar investment in terms of  
9 exactly our program managers that are evaluating  
10 programs. I think Commissioner Rattray indicated that  
11 we are staffed up to provide those oversights and  
12 we're...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: That's not the 19  
14 that was mentioned earlier?

15 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: No,  
16 we've got an additional headcount.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: You've got heads.

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CHENG: So that  
19 we can manage and, to your point, hold accountable  
20 that new program that we're getting.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay, thank you.  
22 Thank you, Chairs.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Now we have  
24 questions from Council Member Williams followed by  
25 Brewer.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello, good  
3 afternoon. Congrats on the 100th, you said,  
4 Cornerstone in your opening. I had a question about  
5 the Cornerstone in Baisley. It's actually in the  
6 Speaker's District. It's been closed for years. Do  
7 you have an update on that one?

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We met with NYCHA,  
9 and there's still capital improvement issues in terms  
10 of the sewage. We will get you a timeline on exactly  
11 where and when we see that community center being  
12 open, but I know that we've actively been working  
13 with NYCHA and touring the sites and meeting with  
14 their team to see exactly how we can quickly resolve  
15 because we're very much interested in making sure  
16 that that site gets up.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I've  
18 probably asked this question a few times when  
19 Cornerstones get brought up. It's been closed for  
20 many years.

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes, but that's a  
22 capital infrastructure issue.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I know, okay.  
24 Yeah, it would be helpful to know a timeline.

2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I will definitely  
3 make sure we get back to you in the timeline with our  
4 latest meeting with NYCHA.

5                   COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. I  
6 just had a followup question to the Chair's question  
7 on the sports programming. I know a lot of your  
8 answers were that you are waiting to see what you all  
9 get back, and so I just wanted to know if the RFP  
10 provided any criteria for providers to provide the  
11 type of sports gaming programs that the Chair  
12 mentioned, so programs tailored to girls, programs  
13 tailored to individuals with disabilities, like did  
14 the RFP itself sort of incentivize or provide any  
15 criteria for providers to submit something that  
16 included that?

17                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, we're in the  
18 process of evaluating all of the proposals, some  
19 we've awarded, so I don't have an answer to tell you  
20 exactly if any of the providers who submit a proposal  
21 has specific proposal to Chair Steven's point on  
22 people with disability.

23                   COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I  
24 understand that. That wasn't my question. My question  
25 was like when providers are responding and submitting

1 things, they're responding to something that you all  
2 put out, right?

3  
4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm not an  
6 expert so help me out so there was a documentation  
7 that was sent out, I'm guessing RFP, if it was called  
8 something else, let me know, so I'm just wondering if  
9 the RFP itself, because we know like what's written  
10 in the RFP is sort of what providers respond to. If  
11 you say I want sports programming that's catered to  
12 all genders and various abilities, then you will  
13 receive that but, if you have a RFP that doesn't  
14 really include those things, then it kind of feels a  
15 little disingenuous to say you're just potentially  
16 waiting for responses, but you didn't really..

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, I think what  
18 we're basically saying is that the State had a rule  
19 and a condition based upon exactly what the funding  
20 is and how the funding is tied to sports program.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. That  
22 doesn't really answer the question.

23 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: Yeah,  
24 Dana Cantelmi, I'm agency Chief Contracting Officer  
25 for DYCD. Just to add to what the Commissioner said,

1 it was funding that was given to us by the State so  
2 the solicitation itself was broad and, when we're  
3 making rewards, we're looking at specifically the  
4 services that they're going to be providing. We were  
5 not specific around girls programming because, again,  
6 we were following the guidelines that were given by  
7 the State's grant.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Did DYCD create  
10 the solicitation or was it given to you as a template  
11 from the State?

12 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: The  
13 State had a template and we built off of it.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, and the  
15 template was very broad and you had to stick to the  
16 template. You couldn't add to the template or edit  
17 the template.

18 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: We  
19 were given the template and we stuck by the template  
20 and we kept it broad but, again, looking and  
21 evaluating the proposals and taking into  
22 consideration what's mentioned here.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But could you  
24 have made edits to the template or were you  
25 prohibited from editing the template?

1  
2 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: We  
3 stayed with the template that was given.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But could you  
5 have edited the template or were you prohibited from  
6 editing?

7 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: The template was  
8 provided not only to us but throughout the State.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I  
10 understand that. It's a big state. My question is,  
11 could you have made edits to the template or were you  
12 prohibited from...

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: So  
14 Council Member Williams...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Sorry,  
16 apparently you weren't sworn in.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Yeah, you  
18 weren't on the list so.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You're going  
20 rogue on us.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Do you affirm  
22 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
23 the truth before this Committee and to respond  
24 honestly to Council Member questions? Please state  
25 your name.

1  
2 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: Yes,  
3 I do.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So technically  
5 you could have lied.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY:

7 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: Dana  
8 Cantelmi.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Now you can't  
11 lie so let me ask you a question again. Were you  
12 prohibited from making edits to the RFP or could you  
13 have...

14 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That situation had  
15 never come up. That wasn't a conversation that we had  
16 with the State on guiding...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: All right, I  
18 guess that's a better answer. I know that the Chair  
19 has her own grievances of Summer Rising, but I just  
20 have a very technical question because the November  
21 Plan included a 19.6-million-dollar reduction in  
22 Summer Rising, but the reduction was made even after  
23 DYCD enrolled 110,000 elementary and middle school  
24 students for the program so can you just explain to  
25



1 us how this PEG will impact Summer Rising and if  
2 there'll be any reductions in slots? If so, how many?

3 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Hi,  
4 Council Member Williams. As mentioned earlier, the  
5 Summer Rising PEG is not a slot reduction, it's not a  
6 service reduction. It's a program model change, and  
7 so the PEG is reflective of the reduction of hours in  
8 the program model so the reduction of hours on Friday  
9 and extended hours in the program.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So considering  
11 the changes on Friday, has the agency made, what  
12 changes has the agency made to the scheduled Friday  
13 outings for the program. You just mentioned that you  
14 made the changes. What exactly are those changes? Are  
15 you just cutting the Friday programming or?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I'm going  
17 to defer to our Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell who  
18 can expand more about the implementation regarding  
19 Summer Rising this summer.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Hello, in  
21 response to the financial reduction to Summer Rising,  
22 we modified the middle school hours so that a young  
23 person's experience will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.,  
24

Monday to Thursday, and they will not be operating on  
Friday.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Will there be  
any impact on outdoor activities and visits to  
cultural institutions?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: I think, you  
know, we meet, as the Commissioner said in his  
testimony, we meet biweekly with the community-based  
organizations operating Summer Rising, and each time  
we use the opportunity to bring forth resources,  
partner agencies, places that are offering a space  
for field trips, and we acknowledge that there won't  
be services on Friday. However, there's a lot of time  
in the afternoon, and we're also meeting closely with  
New York City Public Schools to see how we could use  
that whole time block to the best of our ability to  
make sure that young people get out of the building,  
that we're bringing fun resources to the building  
that they can participate in, like sports activities  
so we feel confident there'll be an enriching  
experience.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: With no program  
on Friday, so like their parents have to find

1 something for them to do on Friday. Okay, and how is  
2 that decision made?

3  
4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, it was a  
5 decision that no one wanted to make but, because of  
6 the fiscal situation of the City and where we were at  
7 at the time, we had to do like other City agencies  
8 and look at service reductions and service cuts.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I just  
10 have one more followup and then I'm done, Chair.  
11 Sorry. No, I understand what you're saying. It's  
12 tough fiscal times. I think we all understand that. I  
13 think my question is a little bit more technical. I  
14 think anytime anyone makes a decision, I gather there  
15 might be a set of criteria or considerations for the  
16 decision that's being made so I really just actually  
17 want like a deeper answer around the thinking and  
18 like the analysis done, like, oh, we see that Fridays  
19 is X, Y, Z and that might be a cut or maybe we could  
20 have cut hours across the board, but that wouldn't  
21 work. Like what was the thinking behind that or was  
22 it just let's just not have programming on Friday?  
23 Like I think that you all are very smart and someone  
24 actually thought about the decision before you did  
25 it.

1  
2           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: the conversation was  
3 we have a cut, we have a PEG, we don't like the PEG,  
4 but, unfortunately, we have to do a PEG, and we  
5 looked across all the service areas and based upon  
6 exactly the recommendations that came from the  
7 various divisions, this is the PEG that we landed on.

8           COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: That did not  
9 answer my question, but thank you very much, Chairs.

10          CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have questions  
11 from Council Member Brewer followed by Avilés.

12          COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
13 much. Just following up on that, because what is the  
14 cost of not having the Friday program? Is there a  
15 number?

16          CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The PEG  
17 value reflected that was mentioned so, for Friday,  
18 the reduction for limiting Friday services is about  
19 10.9 million dollars.

20          COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 10.9, thank you.  
21 Then the question I have would be, understanding that  
22 that was a decision, would there be some analysis,  
23 unfortunately at the end of the summer if we're not  
24 able to restore it, that says there were challenges  
25 in the neighborhood because of this young people, I

1 guess 110,000 of them, having, even though you might  
2 try with PAL or other programs, that they didn't have  
3 anything to do. Would that kind of analysis take  
4 place in this Administration?  
5

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Well,  
7 Council Member Brewer, I don't necessarily agree with  
8 the notion that if the program doesn't operate, it's  
9 going to become crime in the neighborhood. I don't  
10 think there's a one-to-one relationship in that way,  
11 that Summer Rising. I understand that it's part of  
12 the battle... (INAUDIBLE)

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But there's  
14 nothing to do.

15 CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER CANTELMI: All  
16 the kids are criminals, but I will say that I think  
17 that we do attendance, we do monitor the program, and  
18 we're confident that with the robust services that  
19 DYCD provides, that we'll be able to give those  
20 services.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: So they'll have  
22 other services is what you're saying?

23 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Agency  
24 offers a plethora of services so we're hopeful that  
25 the kids will be able to access them.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And to Navita's  
3 point, we are constantly doing program evaluations  
4 and impacts.

5                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. All I'm  
6 saying is it would be good for the community to know  
7 that there are other services like the Community  
8 Board so that they can make sure that's oversight  
9 happening so that the Friday is covered. There are  
10 other programs, but the Settlement Houses may not  
11 know that this is exactly what they should be doing  
12 with this population. Settlement Houses have  
13 programs.

14                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We have regular  
15 meetings with the providers, and we 100 percent agree  
16 that cross-pollinations of programs and talking to  
17 the providers is something that should be done on a  
18 basic level.

19                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Financial  
20 literacy, you had excellent questions. My question  
21 would be evaluation. So you said two hours for every  
22 SYEP member. I'm very involved with World of Money,  
23 which is a more intensive program, so my question  
24 would be, have you done evaluations since 2022 and  
25 what has been the outcome?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So you're talking  
3 about the SYEP and the... (INAUDIBLE)

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The financial  
5 literacy.

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Financial literacy.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I wonder if there  
8 was, because you said it was a couple of years so  
9 you've had some experience. I have to say that  
10 doesn't sound like a lot of financial literacy to me.  
11 That's why I was asking. What kind of evaluation?

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: That's a good  
13 question. When the new Administration took office,  
14 the Mayor, in his expansion from 75,000 young people  
15 to 100,000 young people, he made sure that financial  
16 literacy was part of the curriculum so in terms of  
17 program evaluations, I'll leave that over..

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's what I was  
19 asking about.

20 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: To Commissioner  
21 Montanez.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes. As the  
23 Commissioner stated, over the past few years, we've  
24 really looked to enhance the financial literacy  
25 training for all SYEP participants, and I think one

1 of the great outcomes of that is last year, we  
2 reached the highest number of young people who have  
3 enrolled for a bank account who previously were not  
4 banked. We are now up to 70 percent of our young  
5 people who are banked. Also, as part of our  
6 evaluation throughout the summer, we have pre- and  
7 post-surveys with both our participants and our  
8 employers so the training and work readiness  
9 training, including financial literacy, is also  
10 something that is evaluated and assessed.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is that evaluation  
13 and survey, are they public information?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: We include  
15 some of that survey data as part of our annual  
16 summary, but we can certainly share more detail.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean, I don't  
18 know if you know Worlds of Money, but it's much more  
19 intense, and I hope as time goes on we can do  
20 something that's more intense. Bank account is great,  
21 but Worlds of Money kids can tell you much more than  
22 a bank account, in addition.

23 Literacy, it seems to be, I just didn't  
24 know, do you keep tally? You're not the only ones  
25 doing literacy. There's libraries, etc., but do you



1 keep tally on how much waitlist you have and what  
2 other funding you'd actually need because literacy is  
3 a major challenge in terms of waitlist is my  
4 understanding from my community.  
5

6 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: All right,  
7 good afternoon. Yeah, in terms of waitlist, it's a  
8 complicated thing. Previously...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Everything is  
10 complicated.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Yeah, let  
12 me just explain. Okay, previously, providers kept  
13 waitlist people in their programs, and then later we  
14 found that that number is far from accurate because  
15 you may waitlist a person, then the person next day  
16 might end up in another program down the block so  
17 it's very hard to have an accurate count so now,  
18 actually, we had recently had a providers meeting. We  
19 talked about this. We encourage our providers to come  
20 up with a methodology to keep the number of people  
21 waitlisted and be able to report to us so it gives us  
22 a general sense of people that have not been served  
23 but, yeah, that's why I said many years ago, there  
24 was a general survey of waitlist across literacy  
25 programs in the city, and we got a number, but...

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It was very high.

3 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Huh?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It was very high.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: It was  
6 about 14,000.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Correct, but now,  
8 when do you think, I mean, certainly with technology,  
9 it's not hard to come up with a new methodology. When  
10 do you think that you'll have a new way of analyzing  
11 because there are several agencies, including  
12 libraries, I know, that do so one could go from your  
13 program over to the library. I get it. When do you  
14 think you'll have this new system in place?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Well, we'll  
16 work with our providers and our IT. We have to figure  
17 out a good way to do that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: How long do you  
19 think that'll take? All I can tell you is, everybody  
20 feels that they can't get into a literacy program.  
21 Between the migrants and New Yorkers, it's a long  
22 list, and we have many, many families who can't get  
23 in so I'm just trying to understand what it is that,  
24 how much more a waitlist might determine, if it's  
25 accurate, how many more dollars we need in order to

1 have a fulfilled literacy program. That's what I'm  
2 trying to determine. Because everybody says, we're  
3 fine on literacy. We're not fine on literacy.

4  
5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I think the...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know you have an  
7 RFP out, I know, too, but go ahead.

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, no, no. I think  
9 what Commissioner Zhang was trying to explain, and I  
10 think he did it more appropriately, was talk about  
11 the complexity of system building, and I think that  
12 we're going to have to get back to you exactly what  
13 that looks like and what the cost of that would be.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Because, as you've  
16 just identified, there are silos that are existing,  
17 and that their systems need to talk to each other.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I understand  
19 that, but I think at the same time, to me, this would  
20 be a real new need because it is obviously in the  
21 city where everybody's dying for it and can't get  
22 into a program.

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Whether it's your  
25 program or the library, no openings.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, one of the  
3 things that the Mayor has made sure is that agencies  
4 talk to each other and make sure we're working out of  
5 silos so this gives us...

6                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I am not going to  
7 get into that topic because they do not talk to each  
8 other.

9                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, this gives us  
10 an opportunity to do that and get back to you.

11                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. Soon.

12                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Okay.

13                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The other question  
14 I have is, the issue is relevant to budget because  
15 it's the contracting. 41 percent of Council  
16 designations are your agency. I know it's not just  
17 you, but are you also figuring out how to have more  
18 expeditious contracts so that people can spend their  
19 money, not feel panicked, which is what they do now,  
20 that if they go ahead and spend the money and do the  
21 programs, which are so needed, they might not get  
22 paid so, you know, this is 40 years in the  
23 discussion. You are not the new, you're the new kid  
24 on the block, but you have not solved the problem  
25 despite the Mayor saying I'm going to solve the

1  
2 problem so I just want to know where we're at with  
3 that.

4                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Well, one of the  
5 things that the Mayor's initiative was is to make  
6 sure that non-profit organizations actually have  
7 gotten, and I know Chair Stevens is going to say this  
8 is money that was already given to them, but we made  
9 sure that we did a push to make sure that millions of  
10 dollars went to non-profit organizations who had  
11 backlogs so we're constantly looking and reviewing  
12 and having measures put in place and tracking to make  
13 sure that providers have a seamless system within  
14 PASSPort. We're working with our Mayor's Office of  
15 Contract, MOCS, and that system is constantly  
16 improving so the mitigation and the migration that is  
17 happening, we're hoping that the improvements is  
18 going to fast track more payments.

19                   COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I mean, I know  
20 PASSPort has issues too so it's complicated. Yes, I'm  
21 very aware of the issues with PASSPort.

22                   Just by the way, NYCHA is beloved by many  
23 of us in terms of the residents, and I'm always  
24 concerned, having been Borough President, City  
25 Council, seeing all of Manhattan NYCHAs, there's just

1 not enough support in NYCHA for those families, no  
2 matter what anybody says, so people say Cornerstone  
3 is there, some of them have Settlement Houses. Again,  
4 not operating in a silo, but funding-wise, you have  
5 your Cornerstones, Settlement Houses, you pay for  
6 some of their programs, and the list goes on, but do  
7 you sit down with NYCHA, with other programs, again,  
8 operating not in a silo to say exactly what is needed  
9 here, not what we have, but what do we need, more  
10 hours, different young people that are participating,  
11 et cetera. Does that discussion take place? Because  
12 from my experience, a lot of these centers, not  
13 saying Cornerstone, because not everybody has  
14 Cornerstone, are not open enough hours, just to start  
15 with, and then they don't have enough space, and then  
16 they don't have enough program. Do you sit down with  
17 those? Because you have the programs, you are the  
18 ones often paying for the programs, and we have to  
19 solve the NYCHA issues.

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Our procurement  
22 process, when it comes to the Cornerstone program, is  
23 very inclusive. We make sure that we sit down not  
24 only with the tenant associations, we also sit down  
25

1 with NYCHA, and we collaborate on exactly what  
2 programming and programs looks like.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And when you feel  
5 there's not enough programming, what do you do?

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Most of the issues  
7 involving programming is addressed in our concept  
8 paper and our RFP so I know that the Cornerstone  
9 program, roughly, and the RFP and the concept paper  
10 hasn't been out in a number of years, and we're  
11 looking and we're having conversations with OMB to  
12 make sure that we can definitely look at a concept  
13 paper and then engage our stakeholders, our tenant  
14 associations, NYCHA, just to make sure that we're  
15 addressing the concerns that you just raised.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Then just finally,  
17 the issue of what I call the OEO money. When I was  
18 Borough President, I had to, in certain  
19 neighborhoods, low income, appoint people to work on  
20 this OEO. What do you call these groups that have to  
21 allocate what I would call Lyndon Johnson money, the  
22 old OEO money, and is that program still running, are  
23 they still operating, are they allocating money?

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Hi,  
25 Council Member Brewer. Currently, funding associated

1 with OEO is supporting our Advance and Earn  
2 portfolio.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right, so that's  
5 being...

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Are you  
7 referencing CSBG?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, CSBG, I know.

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Okay.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I was  
11 understanding that there are still people that get  
12 appointed to what we call poverty boards then they  
13 allocate some of what I call Lyndon Johnson OEO  
14 money.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you,  
16 Council Member.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You have to be old  
18 to know what I'm talking about.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: The  
20 translation now, as Navita points out, the oversight  
21 for the Community Service Block Grant funding relates  
22 to what we call Neighborhood Advisory Board  
23 (INAUDIBLE) and we've reported other times over the  
24 NDA initiative, that's the funding, the direct  
25 services funding, and we have, at this time, 41



neighborhoods, and so there are volunteers of up to  
12 members for each of the 41 neighborhoods...

(INAUDIBLE)

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Are they all  
appointed? (INAUDIBLE) vacancies.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I would like to  
give a plug that appointments went out and my office  
has been calling so if you haven't made your  
appointments, please make them.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Thank you. I  
was going to acknowledge you again for that, and we'd  
be happy to sidebar again with our Intergovernmental  
Public Engagement team to show you, whether it's at  
the community district level or at the borough level,  
which vacancies are still available to be filled.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I know there  
are vacancies always. We just need to fill them but,  
all right. Thank you very much.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And I just want to  
add, Chair Stevens...

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They've been  
vacancies for 40 years in case you didn't know.

1  
2           COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Chair Stevens has  
3 been very good in working with us and, where we are  
4 in terms of our appointment, we're better than we  
5 were before and, Council, I want to make sure that we  
6 all understand that the War on Poverty has reached  
7 its 60th anniversary in August so we're looking to do  
8 a celebration in that as well.

9           COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

10          CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Council Member  
11 Avilés.

12          COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chair.  
13 Thank you all for being here.

14           I guess quickly along this line, in terms  
15 of the cuts that were made to many of the slots for  
16 the PEG, in Red Hook, a community that I represent,  
17 and unfortunately is not covered by a NAB, it's a  
18 hyper-local concentration of poverty that the NABs  
19 actually leapfrog over because it's surrounded by  
20 gentrification so I hope that's something that we  
21 continue to look at and try to address but, in  
22 particular in Red Hook, among these cuts, we saw a  
23 program, the COMPASS Explorer Program, that was  
24 incredibly, it was over-enrolled, people were waiting  
25 to get into it and it was cut. Is that part of the

1  
2 assessment in these cuts, to cut programs that are  
3 doing very well and are needed in a community with  
4 very deep poverty?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I know  
6 there's been a lot of conversation about the  
7 assessment and, as I mentioned previously, DYCD  
8 offers services in almost all of our program areas,  
9 adult literacy, immigration, afterschool, workforce  
10 programs, so we want to make sure that as part of our  
11 mission that we stay true to our core programming and  
12 comprehensive services. In the afterschool portfolio,  
13 there's a large portfolio COMPASS that provides  
14 comprehensive services. We understand the value of  
15 the Explorer Program. We are not minimizing the  
16 Explorer Program, and we recognize that it's a highly  
17 utilized program for some of the sites. We're just  
18 stating that, given the direction that we were given  
19 and we wanted to minimize impact to communities and  
20 that provided comprehensive services, we identified  
21 the Explorer Program, and so those programs will  
22 continue to be cut for next year. It has not been  
23 restored.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah.  
25 Unfortunately, in our community, it has a profound

1 impact, and so I think that needs to be reconsidered,  
2 and it's a tough pill to swallow to see requests for  
3 new needs when kids were ready to be served and the  
4 impacts also on jobs, right? Folks who are ready to  
5 continue to support these programs are left with  
6 nothing so I would encourage some really deep  
7 consideration of that, particularly in this  
8 community.  
9

10 I have to switch over to my favorite  
11 topic, adult literacy so Mr. Bobbitt, welcome back.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: I wasn't  
13 sure if I should have left (INAUDIBLE)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, no. You all  
15 know how important this program is to me and many of  
16 my Colleagues here, to New York City, and I just want  
17 to, I know we have the 10 million corrections, so  
18 we're not going to talk about that in particular, but  
19 I just want to clarify some of the numbers, which  
20 continue to be concerning. I think to Council Member  
21 Brewer's point, we know there's 2.2 million adults  
22 who do not have English proficiency and require these  
23 kinds of services at minimum so, with all the  
24 services that we're providing, there's enormous room  
25 for growth and enormous amount of need for these

1 services so we haven't even been scratching the  
2 surface despite our great efforts, which I will  
3 applaud all the work that is going on but, in terms  
4 of the Fiscal '24 RFP, which is noted at 16 million  
5 dollars, at the current rate of the 950-dollar-per-  
6 student rate, this funding would have had the  
7 potential to serve 17,722 students. The current RFP  
8 at that rate will now only serve 9,118 students. I  
9 understand you are increasing the rate. What I would  
10 like to understand is how does DYCD intend to serve  
11 the 8,000 students that are being cut from the  
12 program?

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I want to  
15 just kind of level set yet again on the adult  
16 literacy RFP, so I know you mentioned the RFP funding  
17 so the RFP is currently funded for 11.8 million so I  
18 wanted to start there. Currently, we have a service  
19 level around 11,000 that are served with a PPP of  
20 over 900, right, and so the new RFP intends to serve  
21 around 9,000 for 1,300. I want to just identify that  
22 we also get one-time funding every year and so when  
23 we talk about the service levels, the service levels  
24 are also reflective of the one-time funding we get...

25 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Slow down.

1

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY:

2

(INAUDIBLE)

3

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Slow down, please.

4

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: No

5

problem, so we get one-time funding every year. RFPs

6

can only be procured based on baseline funding, and

7

so many times when I'm referencing service levels in

8

the adult literacy portfolio, it's inclusive of the

9

one-time funding that we receive every year from

10

Council and so, so if the funding continues, we

11

anticipate that we will continue to serve that same

12

service level or, if not, more, but it was our goal

13

with the existing funds that we had to try to

14

increase the PPP to serve because we recognize that

15

that has been an ask from the sector, and so we try

16

to respond to them by increasing the PPP so we

17

anticipate that we will continue to serve more and,

18

if we continue to receive the one-time funds that we

19

get during the adopt plan, we plan on adding it to

20

our existing portfolio to ensure that we continue to

21

serve participants in the city.

22

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: The PPP, of

23

course, I mean, we know this program has been deeply

24

underfunded, right? With the projections of adequate

25

1 funding at 2,700 many years ago was the funding level  
2 that was noted. It might actually be more so, of  
3 course, the increase is well-merited. In fact, we  
4 need to do a lot more to make sure those service  
5 providers are actually made whole to be able to  
6 provide full service. The Council funding  
7 withstanding, nevertheless, the pot is decreasing,  
8 the numbers are decreasing. The math doesn't add up  
9 to how that is going to maintain the same level of  
10 service.  
11

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The  
13 existing level of service is inclusive of the one-  
14 time Council funds so when you're speaking about a  
15 slot reduction or a service reduction, it is because  
16 it is reflective of the gap in funding that is not  
17 included in the RFP because an RFP can only be  
18 included of what is our baseline fund. We cannot  
19 include funds that come in one time during the adopt  
20 plan and so when we speak about service levels in the  
21 adult literacy portfolio, it is inclusive of the one-  
22 time funds. When you see the RFP out on the street,  
23 that is based on our baseline funds and so, just on  
24 our baseline funds, there's a minimal reduction on  
25 the overall system so we anticipate that if we

1 continue to receive that one-time fund that comes  
2 from adopt, there will be no service reduction. If  
3 not, then maybe even more. Because again, the current  
4 portfolio that you're reflecting and you're  
5 mentioning the additional slots is inclusive of the  
6 one-time funds that we get from Council.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So you're  
9 testifying that there will absolutely be no reduction  
10 in the number of people this funding pot will serve  
11 in Fiscal '24.

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY:  
13 Contingent on the one-time funds that we get from  
14 Council. What I'm stating is the service levels that  
15 exist right now includes one-time funds from Council.  
16 If you do an RFP, you cannot procure an RFP with  
17 funds that don't exist so, if we get funds in  
18 Council, you can't include an RFP because it's not in  
19 our budget.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: We're not going to  
21 cut the funds.

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Okay,  
23 then... (INAUDIBLE)

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: We're concerned  
25 about the Admin's continuation of cutting the funds



1  
2 and not funding the appropriate service levels and  
3 the impacts of that, including a shift of an RFP  
4 using very different modality and the impacts of what  
5 that will have on the ground and the ecosystem that  
6 can serve or not serve within that constraint so the  
7 question here becomes adding issues withstanding,  
8 number changes withstanding, problems with COMPASS  
9 withstanding, is a continued decrease in the amount  
10 of funding that is offered going to result in  
11 decreases in service delivery when in fact we're  
12 seeing more need than ever for this specific service.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The adult  
14 literacy portfolio has not had a funding reduction.  
15 DYCD has not reduced the funding for the adult  
16 literacy portfolio.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay.

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The  
19 funding change is reflective of the one-time funds.  
20 If your concern is if there's going to be a service  
21 reduction in this upcoming year, based on what you're  
22 stating that the Council intends to continue  
23 providing one-time funds, there will not be a service  
24 reduction.

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Well, the  
3 numbers will prove the case.

4 Can DYCD identify the asylum seekers that  
5 are accessing adult literacy services through the  
6 contracted providers? Is there a way to know that?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: There's not  
8 a, in the way that I understand the question, there's  
9 not a way, like a fine-tuned way to calculate that  
10 and that's also to protect asylum seekers so there's  
11 not specific information taken at the program site  
12 level as to whether folks are asylum seekers or are  
13 not asylum seekers. I can just tell you we hear  
14 anecdotally that asylum seekers receive service so we  
15 would anticipate that that would continue, but  
16 there's not a number that we can point to, and you  
17 can, I think, appreciate that there's legal reasons  
18 why... (INAUDIBLE)

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: 100 percent. Is  
20 there a way to know folks in temporary housing in the  
21 same way that you use that as a criteria to select  
22 for Summery Rising to make sure those services are  
23 provided?

24 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think that, to  
25 what Commissioner Bobbitt is saying, that there are

1 surveys that providers do, but there's no, that I  
2 think when it comes to the legality of a system and  
3 system tracking, that's something that we don't do.

4  
5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, no, no. I'm  
6 well aware of the implications of system tracking,  
7 the protections we need to make sure for our new  
8 neighbors are in place, particularly if we have a  
9 different Administration. However, we do have a  
10 problem without being able to discern how services  
11 are actually being delivered and where the pressure  
12 points on the needs so if there is a way to do it,  
13 generally schools do it, you also do it through  
14 temporary housing. That might be a mechanism to track  
15 so that we can get a better sense where the pressure  
16 points are.

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think we're  
18 basically saying the same thing to some degree  
19 because if... (INAUDIBLE)

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Right, but you're  
21 not tracking it currently, and what I'm asking for is  
22 for you to track it so that we can then have a better  
23 understanding of where the pressure points are.

24 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: What we can tell you  
25 is that we're constantly meeting with our providers

1 to understand exactly where those pressure points  
2 are.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Right, but you're  
5 unable to respond to it currently in any concrete  
6 form so I guess we need a round two of this  
7 conversation.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: If I could  
9 offer one thing going forward, we do intend to offer  
10 our providers the opportunity to let us know who is  
11 unhoused and one could infer things from that number  
12 but, for the reasons we've already pointed out, we  
13 wouldn't want to speculate too widely about that  
14 number but... (INAUDIBLE)

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: 100 percent, which  
16 is... (INAUDIBLE)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: We could  
18 reference...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Which is why we'll  
20 continue the conversation.

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We will have a round  
22 two.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Awesome, thank  
24 you. In terms of, and Chair, thank you for the time.  
25 How does DYCD plan on managing the transition to the

1 new RFP to make sure that students don't lose  
2 services and programs?

3  
4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: You're referring to  
5 adult literacy?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes, yes.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: We are  
8 moving as quickly as we can to identify the proposers  
9 and the awardees, and then Associate Commissioner  
10 Zhang and his team, we will encourage current  
11 providers, if they don't become future providers, to  
12 make referrals and we'll share as widely as we can  
13 where the new program sites are in the interest of  
14 trying to minimize any disruption to current  
15 students.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And if there is a  
17 scenario where an NTA does not have a provider, how  
18 will DYCD plan to address this gap?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: In the same  
20 way that I'm referencing as participants are welcome  
21 to enroll in any program, whether they reside in that  
22 NTA or otherwise so... (INAUDIBLE)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So the old model.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: I'm sorry?

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So we'll utilize  
3 the approach of the old model and we'll just have  
4 students move to whatever program they see fit.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BOBBITT: Whatever  
6 program they see fit, yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. I think that  
8 might be it but, in terms of the asylum seeker  
9 response I saw in the budget request, that there's  
10 2.3 million for contracted translated services. Is  
11 that the 2.3 million that is being used for the  
12 services in the HERRCs or is that somewhere else?

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The 2.3  
14 million is not associated with the HERRC program  
15 model.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And where are  
17 these contracted translation services being offered,  
18 the 2.3 million?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: The 2.3  
20 million dollars that you're referring to is the one-  
21 time funds that we received in Council funding last  
22 year, and so it's being administered by our  
23 discretionary portfolio program area, and I hope that  
24 answers your question.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So this is the  
3 asylum seeker application?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I'll get  
5 back to you. I'm going to expand more on this  
6 question regarding the 2.3 million.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Oh, it's in State  
8 funds. 2.3 million in State funds added to your  
9 Fiscal '24 for interpretation services at the asylum  
10 application center.

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I'm  
12 unaware of that. We did not receive 2.3 million  
13 dollars for asylum applications.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. Another  
15 technical glitch. We'll follow up.

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Okay.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: We have these in  
18 the documents.

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Not a  
20 problem.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And in terms of  
22 the ESL services that are provided at the HERRCs, can  
23 you tell me how many people have been serviced with  
24 this program?  
25

2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: We're  
3 providing ESL classes at six HERRC sites and  
4 projected to serve 900 participants at those  
5 locations.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And are these  
7 distributed via contracts to providers? I guess, how  
8 many providers are part of this program?

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Six  
10 providers are involved, and their adult literacy  
11 contracts have been amended to add this.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And can you tell  
13 me just a little bit about the scope of the service  
14 that is offered as part of the contract? Just like  
15 the broad parameters, is it a six-week program, a 10-  
16 week program, and how many service delivery hours are  
17 expected?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Well, these  
19 programs are, their contract amended to actually  
20 provide services throughout the year so it's a  
21 continuous program and each program's schedule is  
22 unique.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Sure.

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Based on  
25 the availability of the residents at those places.



1  
2 Some offer like our regular classes, you do six hours  
3 a week, and then hopefully you'll have good  
4 attendance, then you can pre- and post-test people to  
5 see progress but, as you know, the population at  
6 these places are relatively transient, and they don't  
7 stay as long as students in other programs but our  
8 classes are always open. Whenever there is a vacancy,  
9 we get students in so providers are very flexible in  
10 terms of how they deliver those services. It's not  
11 just formal classroom instruction. We also accompany  
12 that with tutoring one-on-one, depending on how their  
13 residents want it.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And can you tell  
15 me, finally, the cost of these six program sites? The  
16 total cost, not each individual one.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: It's about  
18 900,000.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: 900,000.

20 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank  
22 you so much.

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER ZHANG: Sure.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Chair Stevens.

25

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, I'm back  
3 for the lightning round. Okay, I have another RHY  
4 question. It's my understanding that ACS has already  
5 received additional allocations for CityFHEPS  
6 vouchers. Has DYCD received additional allocation of  
7 vouchers as well?

8 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: No.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No. That's  
10 disheartening.

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: I would  
12 state, though, we're still in ongoing conversations.  
13 Our Deputy Commissioner Haskell was meeting with OMB  
14 this past week, and we are confident that they heard  
15 us, and that we'll see what happens in that plan.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm going to add  
17 that to my list of things, too, so I'll just add that  
18 to the list.

19 I just want to jump over to Summer  
20 Rising, and I know some of my Colleagues already  
21 started to ask some of these questions, but just  
22 wanted to go a little bit deeper. How many students  
23 will be served for Summer Rising in FY 2024, and what  
24 is the breakdown between elementary and middle  
25 school?

1  
2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Summer  
3 Rising for this past summer?

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, this upcoming  
5 summer, 2024.

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: You said FY24?

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, '24, yeah,  
8 so that would.. (INAUDIBLE)

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: That  
10 would be this past summer. Are you referencing..  
11 (INAUDIBLE)

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because I'm  
13 going to say this summer and the next summer so if  
14 you have, what's the projection for this summer as  
15 well because that's the next question.

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Well,  
17 this summer is ongoing so I'm going to defer to  
18 Deputy Commissioner Haskell for the application  
19 process.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, that's  
21 fine, but you can give me last summer.

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Last  
23 summer's allocation for elementary?

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Mm-hmm.  
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CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY:

Elementary, 74,800. Middle school, 35,200. Total,  
110,000.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. Hi. I

know, and just thinking about it, because I know it's  
still ongoing, but what are your projections  
currently for the FY, and do we have a number of  
where we're at currently?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: It should be

similar to what we saw last year.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Even with the

reductions on Fridays for the middle school students,  
we're still on par with that?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Yeah, to be

honest, I think we received more middle school  
applications this year than we got last year so  
there's still plenty of interest in the program.

CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's

interesting. That's interesting to hear. Mandated  
students, students with promotions and doubts are  
required to apply for Summer Rising in order to  
participate in CBO-led enrichment program. Do we know  
how many mandated students applied for Summer Rising  
and how many didn't?

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: You're referring to  
3 last year?

4                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, we're talking  
5 about now, so how many applied now? Do we have a  
6 breakdown of how many applied currently?

7                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Yeah, we're still  
8 going through that.

9                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: That's still  
10 happening so, as it's coming in, if we can just keep  
11 that open.

12                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Mm-hmm.

13                   CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And I guess we  
14 can talk a little bit about it and, if this happened  
15 last year, how does this impact the CBO's enrollment,  
16 their RFP, because it doesn't affect their RFP,  
17 right? The Summer Rising, correct? (INAUDIBLE) I knew  
18 I wasn't crazy.

19                   One of the questions I feel like I  
20 haven't asked in a very long time is do you guys have  
21 an idea on when we're going to get an RFP release for  
22 COMPASS?

23                   COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're currently  
24 having conversations with OMB to see exactly where we  
25 can...

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You want me to  
3 add that to the list too?

4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Release that concept  
5 paper.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So you guys have  
7 the concept paper done?

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We're currently  
9 having conversation with OMB and we've already had a  
10 large-scale stakeholder engagement.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So no projection  
12 on like maybe the fall?

13 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Still in  
14 conversation.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Still in  
16 conversation.

17 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Still in  
18 conversation.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right, well,  
20 it's been a conversation since, you know, what is it,  
21 what is it, 10 years we haven't had another one?

22 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And that's why we're  
23 excited about being able to...

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I'm beyond  
25 excited. Let me tell y'all, as soon as it gets

1 released, I'm doing a dance, and I'm sure the  
2 providers will be dancing with me.

3  
4 To jump into the COMPASS Explorers, I  
5 know some of my Colleagues also talked about this,  
6 but just a question around parents' response. Have we  
7 had any response from parents around the cuts to  
8 Explorers, do you think parents are aware of this  
9 change and that this program is being changed, and  
10 how do we engage them in part of this conversation as  
11 we were cutting this program?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Thanks for  
13 that question, Chair Stevens. You know, we do stay in  
14 close communication with our providers and we're  
15 still doing site visits to COMPASS Explorer programs.  
16 We haven't seen a tremendous like pushback or  
17 outreach from parents directly, but I don't want that  
18 to imply that there won't be some parents who will  
19 feel disappointed, but, again, we'll put a lot of  
20 energy into making sure that they can identify nearby  
21 programs and try and make sure that every young  
22 person gets a resource.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, I think,  
24 because I know this was a budget decision and not  
25 necessarily a program decision so I think definitely

1 getting some feedback from parents is key and  
2 important because this will impact them as well so  
3 just thinking about as it continues to roll out  
4 because it hasn't been cut fully yet because they're  
5 still finishing out the year, but thinking about how  
6 do we get some feedback and support from parents and  
7 also making sure that we're able to direct them in  
8 directions of other programming.  
9

10 Some of the feedback on SONYC is that the  
11 current model does not have the adequate flexibility  
12 to address the preferences of middle school youth. In  
13 light of the upcoming concept paper, is DYCD  
14 considering a club model which would address some of  
15 their concerns?

16 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I think the  
17 engagement that we had so far with some of the  
18 providers and the stakeholders, a lot of the  
19 different models have come up in terms of exactly  
20 what this, you know, how do we right size this 10- or  
21 12-year-old model to make sure that the model that is  
22 rolled out has fidelity so we're going to have to get  
23 back to you on exactly what the stakeholders are  
24 saying in terms of exactly what they're looking for  
25 with that level of feedback so we can definitely tell



1 you exactly what that feedback and that engagement  
2 looks like and what was some of the suggestions that  
3 came out of that.  
4

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, definitely  
6 want us to think about how, especially with a program  
7 like Explorers not being here, how do we make sure  
8 that programs moving forward still have some  
9 flexibility as well.

10 I have another Summer Rising question.  
11 This is regarding the paraprofessionals and just, I  
12 know this isn't something you are in charge of, but  
13 just even thinking about like moving into it, this is  
14 something that has been a concern in Summer Rising  
15 and I know DOE is like, no, we always have all the  
16 paraprofessionals in the world and we got everything  
17 on par, but we know that's not always the case, so  
18 are we planning for that around like how do we  
19 support providers around that and what does that look  
20 like, and also specifically programs who are taking  
21 on students with disabilities, what supports and  
22 trainings have we been providing providers up until  
23 the summer?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HASKELL: Absolutely,  
25 I really appreciate that question. Our Summer Rising

1  
2 Leadership Team, we're meeting every Friday with the  
3 Public Schools Office for Students with Disabilities  
4 to plan out every aspect of making it a great  
5 experience for all young people in Summer Rising.  
6 They have initiated a new platform to submit  
7 accommodation plans for young people who are going to  
8 be in Summer Rising, which may include accommodations  
9 for the enrichment CBO portion of the day, and we  
10 already have shared professional development  
11 opportunities around working with students with  
12 disabilities, and we are also planning to do much  
13 more of that before in the next several weeks.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, and I think  
15 similar to the question I asked regarding the  
16 Explorer program being cut, what feedback have we  
17 been getting from parents around the middle school  
18 Fridays being cut, have we been reaching out to  
19 parents, what have they been saying? We'd love to  
20 hear what that process would look like too because I  
21 know you said there's been an uptick in young people  
22 applying, but young people don't really apply, it's  
23 their parents so how are we accounting for that as  
24 well because I would love to see how we can get some

1 feedback from parents to think about how this is  
2 going to impact them moving forward for the summer.

3  
4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, those  
5 conversations are currently ongoing. We haven't seen  
6 much of any vocal response.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, have we  
8 sought it?

9 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Again, we're  
10 engaging with our providers to seek those responses.  
11 Again, it hasn't gone to the level where we see that  
12 parents are vocal to our providers, but that may be  
13 because the program hasn't started yet.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, also it's,  
15 and I think Council Member Williams was saying it,  
16 like even when we put out RFP, if we put out  
17 something and we don't ask the question, then we're  
18 not going to get the answer so even I think as we  
19 were doing this and rolling it out because this is  
20 something that we knew was happening, we should have  
21 definitely been asking parents what the alternative  
22 is because parents don't have a choice and so  
23 thinking about what does it look like and how do we  
24 make sure that we're giving them support and also  
25 navigating them to the other programs that we have

1 that they probably can seek as well on those Fridays  
2 afternoon and hopefully using our community centers  
3 and all these other things to ensure safe havens for  
4 our young people because I'm worried just in the  
5 sense of idle time for young people sometimes isn't  
6 the best thing that we can do.  
7

8 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We definitely hear  
9 you on that, and Deputy Commissioner Haskell and her  
10 team is constantly in communication with providers to  
11 make sure that they understand that there's  
12 alternatives that you just spoke of.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah. I'm going  
14 to move on to Summer Youth Employment. The Fiscal  
15 2025 Executive Budget for SYEP is 254.5 million, 5.6  
16 million less than the Fiscal 2024 Adopted Budget. Why  
17 is the 2025 budget for SYEP less than the Fiscal 2024  
18 Adopted Budget?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BAILEY: Off the  
20 top of my head, it's probably a revenue adjustment,  
21 but there's been no change to the funding for FY25.  
22 We're going to serve the same number of participants.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the target  
24 number of youth participating in Fiscal 2025? Is  
25

1 there room for growth to exceed the 100,000 youth who  
2 received employment last summer?

3  
4 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I see Chair Brannan  
5 shaking his head. I assume that's in reference to  
6 your question but, in terms of the North Star, our  
7 North Star is always to look and see exactly how we  
8 can improve the program and expand the program. Our  
9 answer is we would love to one day be in a situation  
10 where every young person who wants a job gets a job  
11 so that is definitely our North Star. That's  
12 something that we would love to achieve, but we also  
13 understand that the quality of the program, and  
14 you've mentioned quality programming as well in  
15 previous conversations with me, is very vitally  
16 important to make sure that our providers have the  
17 capacity to be able to deal with whatever extension  
18 is out there.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So is the target  
20 number for this summer still 100?

21 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Still 100,000 young  
22 people.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Which is the largest  
25 in the country, by the way. I'm just saying.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right, give  
3 yourself the kudos. Go off. Thank you. He said, I  
4 want my credit.

5 All right and, as we talk about providers  
6 and quality, how many providers are we still at, what  
7 was it, like 75 last year, 75 providers. Are we still  
8 at that same number of providers for SYEP, and is  
9 DYCD planning to do RFP for SYEP to enhance the  
10 program and qualify providers and expand that list?  
11 Oh, welcome back.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes, so we  
13 currently have uniquely 66 providers in the  
14 portfolio.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Wasn't it 75  
16 before?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: I think at  
18 the start of the RFP, we were about 70. We're now at  
19 66 unique. However, these...

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What happened to  
21 those providers? The left?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: 66  
23 providers operate almost 250 programs throughout the  
24 city.

1  
2 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: And was it about  
3 19,000 worksites?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes, and  
5 worksites last year were 17,000.

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: 17,000.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So what happened  
8 to those five providers, because you said you started  
9 out at 70, and you're at like 66.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: There were  
11 a few providers that left the portfolio.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Do you know why?  
13 You don't do exit interviews?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yes. Some  
15 of them were new to the portfolio, were not familiar  
16 with it.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They were  
18 overwhelmed.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: A little  
20 overwhelmed so we did our best to provide capacity  
21 building and technical assistance, but our current  
22 provider pool has done an amazing job in managing the  
23 growth and also maintaining and improving program  
24 quality.

1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Are you guys  
3 planning on doing an RFP anytime soon for SYEP to  
4 expand the portfolio of providers?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MONTANEZ: Yeah, we've  
6 recently extended the current contracts.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: You know I hate  
8 an extended contract, because that means we just  
9 extend the time, and there's no growth in the room  
10 so.

11 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: So I think we're on  
12 the same direction. We'd like to get refreshed  
13 programming and new providers... (INAUDIBLE)

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And not just new  
15 providers, because remember we expanded, and the RFP  
16 had come out I think like the year before, and so we  
17 expanded and still had only the same providers so I  
18 could see why those five providers were like, I'm  
19 getting out of here. This is crazy. It's a lot.

20 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: It is a lot, and  
21 that's why quality of programming is important  
22 whenever we talk about expansion, to make sure that  
23 providers have the capacity to be able to run a very  
24 robust programming.



1  
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: All right. Well,  
3 we definitely need to be thinking about how do we fix  
4 that. I have some solutions. We'll talk offline about  
5 it.

6 Crisis management. At the Fiscal 2025  
7 Preliminary Budget hearing, there were concerns  
8 regarding cuts to legal aid services at 1.5 million  
9 for Cure Violence programs. Has there been any  
10 discussion with the Admin to restore this for Fiscal  
11 2025?

12 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Based upon our  
13 conversation that we had at the Preliminary Budget  
14 and your suggestion, there is a scheduled meeting  
15 with...

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: When is it?  
17 Because I was about to ask the questions, because  
18 they emailed me and said that the meeting has not  
19 been scheduled.

20 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And they have not  
22 heard from you guys.

23 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We have a scheduled  
24 meeting on...

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: What's the date?

2 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER RATTRAY: Monday.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Monday? You  
4 scheduled this yesterday at 8 o'clock?

5 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: No, just now, while  
6 we were... no, I'm joking. The meeting is scheduled for  
7 Monday. We heard you. We left during the Preliminary  
8 Budget. We said we got to meet with them.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I got an email  
10 from them this morning, and so who are you all  
11 scheduling this with and who are you all scheduled to  
12 be there? What providers are going to be there? I  
13 would like to know who's on this email because I got  
14 an email...

15 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We can definitely  
16 share that with you offline.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: They emailed me  
18 this morning.

19 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: We'll share that  
20 information with you offline.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: (INAUDIBLE)

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know. Okay,  
23 because they're going to text me. Y'all know they're  
24 going to text me.

25

1  
2           Has the agency had any discussion with  
3 Legal Aid regarding the services for program? Oh,  
4 that's going to be scheduled on Monday so that'll be  
5 discussed. Okay.

6           I think I'm done, Chair.

7           CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You good?

8           CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: No, but I think  
9 I'm done.

10          CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay,  
11 Commissioner and your team, thank you very much, and  
12 we look forward to advocating on your behalf to OMB  
13 to restore some of these funds.

14          COMMISSIONER HOWARD: I appreciate you,  
15 Chair Brannan and Chair Stevens. Thank you very much,  
16 and also the rest of the Council. Appreciate you.  
17 Have a good day.

18          CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So we'll take a  
19 15-minute break, and then we're going to hear from  
20 the public.

21          Just a reminder, if you want to testify,  
22 make sure you fill out a witness slip with the  
23 Sergeant-at-Arms, and we'll be back in about 15  
24 minutes. Thanks.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Can everybody  
3 settle down? We're getting ready to continue.  
4 Everybody, settle down.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we're going  
6 to start the public portion of the Committee on  
7 Finance joint with the Committee on Children and  
8 Youth.

9 We're going to start with our first  
10 panel. Forgive me in advance if I say your name wrong  
11 or I can't read the handwriting. Lauren Galloway,  
12 Nora Moran, Dante Bravo, Michelle Fields, Caitlyn  
13 Passaretti, and Annie Minguez.

14 Do you want to go left to... Okay, make  
15 sure your mic is on. Okay, just say your name and  
16 begin.

17 DANTE BRAVO: Alrighty. Good afternoon.  
18 Thank you to Chair Stevens, Chair Brannan for the  
19 opportunity to testify. My name is Dante Bravo, and  
20 I'm the Senior Policy Analyst over at Children's Aid.  
21 For 170 years, Children's Aid has been committed to  
22 ensuring that there are no limits to a young person's  
23 aspirations. Today, our over 2,000 staff members  
24 empower nearly 50,000 children, youth, and families  
25 in Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and

1 the North Shore of Staten Island. The Executive  
2 Budget released last month maintains the 6.9-million-  
3 dollars cut to COMPASS and 19.6-million-dollar cut to  
4 DYCD's portion of Summer Rising. This is in spite of  
5 the fact that our programs and events have serviced  
6 over 20,000 youth and community members within our  
7 Youth Services Department alone. The City must do  
8 better to assess the need for these services. As one  
9 of the largest and oldest youth-serving organizations  
10 in the city, Children's Aid calls for a restoration  
11 to all of these outrageous cuts. The cut to Summer  
12 Rising in particular presents serious operational and  
13 labor challenges. This cut eliminates Friday  
14 programming for middle school students and shortens  
15 the day, resulting in fewer hours of childcare for  
16 our hardworking families. Limiting hours also means  
17 less opportunities for enriching experiences like  
18 field trips, which makes engagement for our young  
19 people a lot harder and lowers the quality of our  
20 programs. Also, as an employer of over 2,000 staff,  
21 we are responsible to ensure that staff continue  
22 steady employment or else lose them entirely to an  
23 incredibly competitive job market. Because of these  
24 cuts, we now have staff facing unemployment, despite  
25

1 the fact that we know our community members need  
2 these extended hours. We also urge the City to  
3 immediately release the request for proposals for the  
4 SONYC COMPASS system by the end of Calendar Year  
5 2024. Might I remind this Council that the Department  
6 of Youth and Community Development did say on record  
7 that it would be released in previous hearings back  
8 in 2022 that it would be released by the end of  
9 Calendar Year 2022. Delaying this RFP means that our  
10 staff have to wait for longer wages that recognize  
11 their worth and that our city's youth will have to  
12 stay on waiting lists for these programs. Thank you  
13 again for the opportunity to testify. Please reach  
14 out with any questions on this topic.

16 LAUREN GALLOWAY: Good afternoon. My name  
17 is Lauren Galloway. My pronouns are they and them,  
18 and I'm an Advocacy Coordinator at the Coalition for  
19 Homeless Youth. I want to thank the Chairs and the  
20 Committee today for giving us this time and echoing  
21 those asks for runaway and homeless youth. We're  
22 really looking forward to working together to address  
23 how we can meet the needs of runaway and homeless  
24 youth providers through the DYCD system and making  
25 sure that they're fully getting the needs met so

1 everybody can find permanent housing. I'm just going  
2 to echo a few of our asks, but I'll be submitting  
3 longer written testimony to emphasize these. First, a  
4 one-time 30 percent contract increase totaling 1.63  
5 million for the DYCD-funded drop-in centers to fund  
6 support services for youth newly arriving and  
7 unaccompanied minors. From Fiscal Year '23 to '24,  
8 the DYCD drop-in saw a 40 percent increase in  
9 utilization of services despite any additional  
10 funding being rewarded. The additional funding would  
11 support meeting the basic needs of young people and  
12 fund more appropriate staffing for the sites. We're  
13 also going to ask for another 625,000 invested to  
14 fund five lawyers in the RHY programs to support  
15 those newly arriving youth and those migrants needing  
16 services being given access so they can get fully  
17 funded asylum seeker legal services. The second thing  
18 we're asking for is an additional 11.7 million in  
19 funding to right-size the DYCD shelter contracts and  
20 to add additional RHY shelter beds. Data reported by  
21 DYCD shows that the first six months of 2023 to the  
22 last six months, there was a 7,000 percent increase  
23 in the amount of young people that were turned away  
24 to the streets because there wasn't a vacant bed for  
25

1 them to be placed in. The mayor says that he doesn't  
2 think that 500 young people sleeping on the streets  
3 is bad. We think that's not only bad, but  
4 unacceptable. In addition, DYCD must prioritize  
5 allocating new beds that are funded to serve  
6 populations with the greatest documentations needed  
7 in the areas that are easily accessible to young  
8 people. Thirdly, NYCD must ensure that young people  
9 have support to exit homelessness by maintaining 1.6  
10 million in funding for housing navigators at the DYCD  
11 drop-in centers as well as 1.63 million to cut for  
12 the Fiscal Year 2024 for peer navigators. Again, I  
13 will continue the rest of this in my written  
14 testimony, but please let me know if you have any  
15 questions. Thank you.

17 CAITLYN PASSARETTI: Hello, and thank you,  
18 Chair Stevens and the Children and Youth Committee  
19 for hosting this hearing. My name is Caitlyn  
20 Passaretti. I'm a Policy and Advocacy Associate with  
21 the Citizens Committee for Children of New York, and  
22 I use she, her pronouns. I want to echo the urgency  
23 of restoring afterschool and youth service cuts,  
24 which are occurring at a time when 80 percent of  
25 families citywide cannot afford afterschool care for



1 their children. Like Dante and Lauren before me, we  
2 believe it is critical that the City restore funding  
3 for all afterschool and runaway and homeless youth  
4 programs. I specifically want to highlight the 6.9  
5 million cut to COMPASS Afterschool, which is  
6 resulting in a loss of 3,538 slots for young people.  
7 We also strongly oppose the 19.6 million cut to  
8 Summer Rising, which will shrink programming to just  
9 four days a week and eliminate field trips for  
10 participating youth. I also want to stress the  
11 importance of baselining 25 million for Promise NYC  
12 in our City's budget. This program is a lifeline for  
13 undocumented families, ensuring they can access  
14 essential childcare services. This program is about  
15 equity and inclusivity, ensuring that every child,  
16 regardless of immigration status, has access to the  
17 support they need to thrive. I also additionally, in  
18 partnership with the Coalition for Runaway and  
19 Homeless Youth, we want to thank you for being such a  
20 strong partner and want to elevate the following  
21 priorities. Restoring and baselining 1.6 million for  
22 housing navigators positions to assist and connect  
23 homeless youth with safe housing, restore 1.6 million  
24 for the runaway and homeless youth peer navigators,  
25

1 and ensuring that we have more shelter beds for  
2 runaway and homeless youth and young adults. Such  
3 programs can build safety and connect young people  
4 with the support they need and, in the same vein,  
5 want to highlight that the Arches program and Next  
6 Steps programs, which are mentorship programs that  
7 support young people, have been cut in the November  
8 Plan in the Preliminary Budget, and we want to  
9 restore the 1.6 million to the Arches program and the  
10 2.6 million to the Next Steps program. These programs  
11 also build safety within communities by providing  
12 care, connection to job opportunities, and emotional  
13 support to young people who may or may not have had  
14 any interaction with the justice system. These asks,  
15 if fulfilled, will help support our city and our  
16 youth. We look forward to continuing our work with  
17 you to achieve these demands, and thank you for the  
18 opportunity to testify.

19  
20 NORA MORAN: Good afternoon. My name is  
21 Nora Moran. I'm the Director of Policy and Advocacy  
22 at United Neighborhood Houses. We represent New York  
23 City Settlement Houses. Our written testimony goes  
24 into more detail, but I'll just start by saying it's  
25 very troubling that we're basically saying the exact

1 same things we said in our Prelim Budget testimony a  
2 couple of weeks ago. First, on ACS, we are calling  
3 for a baseline of the Promise NYC program at 25  
4 million dollars. This is a program that truly does  
5 change lives. We hear stories from our settlement  
6 houses all the time about how parents are so grateful  
7 that their kids have somewhere to go, can eat two  
8 meals a day, that they can focus on work and finding  
9 jobs. You know, it's really troubling that the City's  
10 answer recently to children who have been selling  
11 candy on the subways is to put up flyers telling them  
12 not to do that but not to provide childcare for  
13 children under the age of five and other after-school  
14 opportunities for young people so really would love  
15 to see that restored. On DYCD, again, very concerned  
16 that the 6.9-million-dollar cut to COMPASS and SONYC  
17 program still stands. COMPASS Explorer programs are  
18 very highly utilized. Most of them are meeting their  
19 ROPs, so the fact that that program is just fully  
20 being eliminated is very troubling and questionable.  
21 And then on Summer Rising, again, the 19-million-  
22 dollar cut that's reducing middle school hours.  
23 Listening to DYCD's testimony earlier, we don't know  
24 of Friday programming that's available for those kids  
25

1 to go somewhere on Fridays. We don't know of any  
2 provider that just does Friday programming to fill in  
3 that gap. It certainly wouldn't be free so providers  
4 are really kind of left asking this question of, we  
5 don't know where to send students. We can't do summer  
6 camp trips in the way that we used to so, again, it's  
7 just the lack of urgency on that from DYCD's part.  
8 There's no information on that in the operations  
9 manual for Summer Rising. It hasn't really been  
10 addressed in the provider convenings they've been  
11 having. Again, just sort of why are we doing this,  
12 why are we having this cut when we know that  
13 programming is important for middle school students.  
14 Thank you.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

17 MICHELLE FIELDS: Good afternoon, Chair  
18 and Madam Co-Chair and the Committee. I am Attorney  
19 Michelle Fields, Co-Supervising Attorney of the  
20 Community Justice Unit. Thank you for this  
21 opportunity to provide testimony on the critical  
22 issue of funding for the Community Justice Unit. This  
23 testimony underscores the indispensable role of CJU  
24 that we play in the crisis management system to  
25 combat gun violence and gang violence in underserved

1 and marginalized communities in New York City. The  
2 Community Justice Unit is not just a legal service  
3 provider but an integral component of the crisis  
4 management system. It offers comprehensive legal  
5 services to our city's most socially, economically,  
6 educationally, marginalized, and under-resourced  
7 communities throughout New York City, particularly  
8 our youth and our adults. These services are not  
9 ancillary. These services are not referable as stated  
10 by DYCD in their preliminary testimony. These  
11 services are important because these services are  
12 preventative, they address public safety and, as CMS  
13 expands, it reaches to 40 sites and 31 neighborhoods  
14 throughout New York City, the demand for our  
15 services, CJU's wraparound legal services, has grown  
16 significantly, underscoring the unique and  
17 indispensable role that we play in the CMS system.  
18 While we appreciate the positive recognition from  
19 Mayor Adams' Administration, we ask this Commission  
20 to restore the 1.5 reduction from CJU, and it's  
21 important that you uphold the commitment of the CMS  
22 sites to really combat gun and gang violence in all  
23 of those designated sites. In closing, for those that  
24 are mothers, grandmothers, guardians as well as  
25

1  
2 godmothers, we say on behalf of CJU, we wish you a  
3 happy Mother's Day, and we ask that you restore  
4 funding, the 1.5 million to CJU.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all  
6 very much.

7 Okay, our next panel, we have Jonée  
8 Billy, Erica Silberman, Tené Howard, Raquea  
9 Hemingway, and Lisbett Rodriguez.

10 JONÉE BILLY: Good afternoon, Chair  
11 Brannan, Chair Stevens, and Committee Members. My  
12 name is Jonée Billy. I am the Senior Director of  
13 Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs at  
14 PowerPlay, but today I'll be here in a dual capacity  
15 representing both PowerPlay and the Sports Training  
16 and Role Models for Success Citywide Girls  
17 Initiative, also known as STARS CGI. PowerPlay is now  
18 in its 26th year and is dedicated to empowering 1,100  
19 youth across all five boroughs of New York City. Our  
20 organization propels girls beyond their  
21 circumstances, providing access to experiences,  
22 strong role models, and a blueprint for  
23 opportunities. We firmly believe in creating spaces  
24 where New York City girls and young women can become  
25 active, think creatively, and engage in discussions

1 around issues that impact them directly. Moreover,  
2 PowerPlay serves as the lead agency for STARS CGI, a  
3 coalition of 10 leading non-profits. Together, we  
4 support the healthy development of over 6,000 girls  
5 and gender-expansive youth, helping them overcome  
6 barriers and become leaders in their communities.  
7 STARS focuses on developing the life and leadership  
8 skills through various programs, such as after-school  
9 sports, academic achievement, enrichment, STEM,  
10 college preparation, and arts initiatives. These  
11 efforts have created thousands of program slots and  
12 enriched programming for girls throughout all five  
13 boroughs. In light of current challenges, STARS CGI  
14 is deeply committed to addressing the mental health  
15 and empowerment needs of our city's youth. We have  
16 witnessed a significant escalation in mental health  
17 needs, especially among young people of color due to  
18 the recent tumultuous events. Recognizing these  
19 critical gaps, STARS CGI has prioritized equipping  
20 youth with strategies for social and emotional well-  
21 being while empowering them to speak out on societal  
22 issues. However, the sustainability of these vital  
23 programs is at risk without adequate funding. Our  
24 City Council funding of 1.4 million in FY24 has been  
25

1 instrumental in ensuring the accessibility of our  
2 initiatives to those in need. I implore you to be  
3 steadfast advocates for STARS CGI and support the  
4 restoration of our funding and, if the budget so  
5 allows, an increase of that funding. I thank you for  
6 allowing me to testify today.  
7

8 ERICA SILBERMAN: Good afternoon, Chair  
9 Stevens, Chair Brannan, and esteemed Committee  
10 Members. I am Erica Silberman, Director of Engagement  
11 and Partnerships for the past six years at Girls  
12 Write Now, after having started as a mentor 15 years  
13 ago. We want to share our gratitude and appreciation  
14 for your continuous prioritization of investments in  
15 young people, specifically girls and gender-non-  
16 conforming youth. Girls Write Now is New York's first  
17 and only writing and mentoring program for girls and  
18 gender expansive youth from systemically underserved  
19 communities. Approximately 90 percent are of color,  
20 70 percent are immigrants or first generation, and 25  
21 percent are LGBTQIA+. We match them with professional  
22 writers and digital media makers as their personal  
23 mentors while providing unique creative and  
24 professional curricular experiences. For more than 25  
25 years, we have been breaking down the barriers of



1  
2 gender, race, age, and poverty to mentor the next  
3 generation of writers and leaders who are impacting  
4 businesses, shaping culture, and creating change.  
5 Historically, 100 percent or nearly 100 percent of  
6 our seniors go on to college with Girls Write Now  
7 supporting them through higher education and  
8 professional journeys. We continually rank among the  
9 top non-profits nationwide for leadership, capacity  
10 building in the field, and for driving social  
11 emotional growth for young people. Mentorship,  
12 community, and resilience building are at the core of  
13 what we do and essential to a young person's success.  
14 Twice, we have been recognized by the White House as  
15 one of the nation's top youth programs. Girls Write  
16 Now is proud to be a founding partner of the STARS  
17 Citywide Girls Initiative, a collection of 10 New  
18 York City non-profits joining forces to raise crucial  
19 funding for girls and gender-expansive young adults.  
20 Altogether, we've served upwards of 500,000 young  
21 people over the last 10 years, supporting and  
22 nurturing their growth as leaders, artists, athletes,  
23 and members of their communities. We respectfully  
24 urge the City Council to make deeper investments in  
25 this community and would like the Council to not only

2 fully restore funding for STARS Citywide Girls  
3 Initiative, but to also enhance it. Thank you.

4 LISBETT RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon, Chair  
5 Stevens, Chair Brannan, and esteemed Committee  
6 Members. I'm Lisbett Rodriguez, Programs and Systems  
7 Senior Coordinator at Girls Write Now. I was a Girls  
8 Write Now mentee 10 years ago and have been on staff  
9 for the last five years at the organization. As an  
10 organization, Girls Write Now provides avenues for  
11 mentees to be recognized as artists internally  
12 through our podcasts, films, annual anthologies, and  
13 zines, and externally through writing contests as  
14 well as submission and performance opportunities.  
15 When our young people are published, their voice and  
16 their craft is legitimized, which in turn impacts  
17 their confidence, self-esteem, and career outlooks.  
18 One mentee alum, Kaya Fraser, a recent graduate of  
19 Howard University, shared that Girls Write Now is  
20 always a home I can return to because it's one of the  
21 first places I felt seen and heard for my words.  
22 Here, surrounded by like-minded people, I could say  
23 with confidence I am a writer. Kaya is now on our  
24 Editorial Advisory Committee and published in our new  
25 book on The Art of the Craft. As a founding member of

1 STARS Citywide Girls Initiative, we ask the City  
2 Council to continue to make investments into this  
3 community by not only fully restoring STARS CGI  
4 funding for the next Fiscal Year but to also enhance  
5 it so we can continue serving girls and gender-  
6 expansive young New Yorkers across a number of  
7 disciplines in all 51 council districts. Thank you so  
8 much for giving me the opportunity to testify.

10 RAQUEA HEMINGWAY: Greetings, I'm Raquea  
11 Hemingway. I'm honored to be addressing you today. I  
12 am here representing Figure Skating in Harlem in  
13 multiple capacities, as an alum, as a parent of a  
14 current program participant, and as a Director of  
15 Student and Family Engagement. This non-profit  
16 organization has profoundly impacted my life and also  
17 many lives of young individuals. Figure Skating in  
18 Harlem operates on three pillars, skating, academics,  
19 and leadership. Your financial contribution plays a  
20 crucial role in enabling organizations like ours to  
21 bridge the gap of access and equity in communities  
22 that need it most. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to  
23 all Council Members and Staff present here today for  
24 their valuable time and for recognizing the  
25 importance of youth development and social reform.

1 The significance of STARS initiative cannot be  
2 overstated, particularly due to its focus on  
3 investing in girls of color. By providing opportunity  
4 that these girls would not typically have access to,  
5 we are leveling the playing field. For example, this  
6 past year, several students from Figure Skating in  
7 Harlem had an extraordinary opportunity to serve as  
8 international ambassadors in South Africa. This  
9 experience not only broadened their horizons, but  
10 enhanced their self-esteem. Despite language  
11 barriers, they found common ground through sports,  
12 arts, and culture, a form of education that is truly  
13 invaluable. When remarkable opportunities are  
14 presented to girls in communities like Harlem and the  
15 Bronx, I feel very compelled to advocate for  
16 continued support in forums such as this. I urge you  
17 to continue supporting young women of color as a  
18 matter of urgency. There is an abundance of data that  
19 will support our plea today. The needs are evident.  
20 We see them. We feel them. What is required now is  
21 your leadership and ongoing financial support so that  
22 initiatives like STARS and community members like  
23 myself can effectively meet the needs of girls of  
24 color that we serve. Thank you.  
25

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all  
very much.

Okay, our next panel, Shawn Jean-Louis,  
Sebastien Vante, Francesca Perrone, Nadia Swanson,  
Steven Morales, and Ramon LeClerc.

Okay, you want to go left from right?  
Just make sure your mic is on.

FRANCESCA PERRONE: Okay. Thank you,  
Council Members Brannan and Stevens and all other  
Members of the Committee on Finance and Committee for  
Children and Youth for taking this time to host the  
hearing. My name is Francesca Perrone, and I am  
representing Hispanic Federation, a non-profit  
organization that seeks to strengthen the Latino  
community and Latino institutions through robust  
programming and legislative advocacy. I am here today  
to advocate for Latinos across New York and ensure  
that Latino-serving institutions are well supported.  
We are thankful to the Administration for including a  
range of priorities that support vulnerable  
communities and families in the Preliminary Budget.  
Our network of 650 member and partner organizations,  
200 of which are in New York, are at the front lines  
in providing service for our neighborhoods and

1 communities. Despite being significantly under-  
2 capitalized and under-resourced, local community-  
3 based organizations remain the heart and soul of  
4 growing vulnerable communities and Latino families.  
5 CBOs uplift communities and organize them to advance  
6 equity and opportunities to increase the quality of  
7 life for all. Today, we are taking the time to  
8 advocate for the expansion of key funds for the  
9 upcoming year to support the ever-growing need of  
10 Latino families and ensure that the City prioritizes  
11 the allocation and resources to improve their well-  
12 being. Essentially, an investment in vulnerable  
13 communities is an investment in an equitable and more  
14 prosperous New York. Hispanic Federation is thankful  
15 for the 3.7 million in continued support for the  
16 Communities of Color Non-profit Stabilization Fund in  
17 the 2024 budget. This initiative has grown to support  
18 over 700 capacity-building projects. As such, we are  
19 respectfully asking you to continue the support for  
20 the CCNSF with a 7.5-million-dollar budget allocation  
21 in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Protecting and  
22 expanding the CCNSF is vital. Due to overwhelming  
23 need, our organizations are working around the clock  
24 to provide services for communities of color across  
25

1 New York. Larger, more established non-profits rely  
2 on endowment's affluent board leadership and  
3 development teams to provide the stability that our  
4 colored non-profits unfortunately do not have access  
5 to. Thus, the CCNSF funding... Thank you for your time.  
6 We've provided written testimony that expands on the  
7 work of Hispanic Federation and the requests.

8  
9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

10 STEVEN MORALES: Good afternoon, Chairs  
11 Brannan and Stevens. Thank you for the time today. My  
12 name is Steven Morales. I'm the New York Policy  
13 Director at All Our Kin. All Our Kin is a non-profit  
14 organization that trains, supports, and sustains  
15 home-based family childcare educators across New York  
16 City, and like Nora, from before, in my Preliminary  
17 Budget testimony, I spoke a lot about the importance  
18 of early childhood education. Unfortunately, we  
19 haven't seen restoration of many of the cuts that  
20 were proposed in that Preliminary Budget. Over the  
21 past few years, there's somewhere between 3 and 400  
22 million dollars that our 3K and pre-K systems have  
23 been defunded and so, really, we must put our city  
24 back on track for full, free 3K and pre-K to be  
25 universal for everyone. I appreciate that you've all

1 supported that. In addition to that, there's the  
2 voucher and contracted system of early childhood care  
3 that ACS manages. I have a couple of notes on  
4 restorations that we need there and funding we need  
5 there. First, we need funding to raise the voucher  
6 pay rates for childcare providers who receive  
7 vouchers to the maximum allowable rate. ACS currently  
8 pays based on what providers charge to families, even  
9 though they're allowed to pay more, and so we need  
10 funding to increase and fill that gap. Next, we need  
11 to expand access to families, specifically by  
12 baselining 25 million dollars for Promise NYC. We  
13 know how important that program has been for  
14 undocumented children. Second, we're calling to fund  
15 presumptive eligibility for ACS vouchers, which would  
16 allow families to begin receiving childcare vouchers  
17 as soon as their applications are received, rather  
18 than waiting the weeks and sometimes months that it  
19 takes to have those applications processed. Finally,  
20 we need ACS to be fully staffed to be processing  
21 those childcare applications. We hear all time and  
22 again about how long that wait can be to get a  
23 childcare voucher. Thank you for your commitment to  
24  
25



1 early childhood and appreciate your time today. Thank  
2 you.  
3

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

5 SHAWN JEAN-LOUIS: Good afternoon. Shawn  
6 Jean-Louis. I'm the Policy Director over at Expanded  
7 Schools. We're an afterschool intermediary that  
8 partners with direct service organizations in the  
9 afterschool space to support their capacity for  
10 program and service delivery. Really appreciate the  
11 opportunity to speak today. Thank you, Chair Stevens,  
12 thank you, Chair Brannan, and the space created to  
13 engage in this discourse. I just want to take a quick  
14 second to give a shoutout to the Council for a robust  
15 budget response and for the Chamber's partnership  
16 with the Emergency Coalition to Save Education  
17 Programs to get important restorations on the DOE  
18 side of things. There's more work to do, but I think  
19 it's important to kind of name that accomplishment  
20 here today. On the COMPASS and Summer Rising  
21 reductions, really appreciate the pressure that was  
22 applied today by the Chamber. Expanded joins its  
23 partners in calling for the restoration of the yearly  
24 19.6-million-dollar reduction to Summer Rising as  
25 long as it will not put undue pressure on providers

1 for FY25, considering how late we are in the planning  
2 process, and the yearly 6.9-million-dollar reduction  
3 to COMPASS as well. Understanding that this is a  
4 City-level hearing, just want to echo some statements  
5 that I made back in my March testimony on the  
6 Preliminary Budget. I think it's important to flag  
7 some changes at the State level that really  
8 exacerbate the City's divestment. LEAPS, the new  
9 afterschool contract at the State level, doesn't  
10 serve children over the age of 12. There are at least  
11 35 Empire programs and at least 25 Advantage programs  
12 in the city that operate in buildings that house  
13 middle and high school students, and those are the  
14 programs that were combined to create LEAPS so, when  
15 we talk about COMPASS Explorers, the new COMPASS RFP,  
16 SONYC, Summer Rising, Middle School, the implication  
17 is that much more important. Youth mental health is a  
18 major talking point right now. While there's this  
19 divestment from spaces of unconditional love and  
20 positive regard, unique spaces in that sense, even  
21 more so than the traditional school day, given the  
22 focus on high-stakes assessment and consistent  
23 measurement, that trauma is absent typically in these  
24 enrichment spaces so, as a sub-grant distributing  
25

2 entity, as a technical assistance provider, as a  
3 workforce developer, just want to make Expanded  
4 available to partner with the Council to fill any  
5 gaps in service moving forward. Thank you for the  
6 opportunity to testify today.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

8 NADIA SWANSON: Good afternoon. My name is  
9 Nadia Swanson. My pronouns are they, them. I'm the  
10 Director of Technical Assistance and Advocacy at the  
11 Ali Forney Center. We're the nation's largest and  
12 most comprehensive program for LGBTQ unhoused youth.  
13 Thank you, Chair Brannan, Chair Stevens, for your  
14 questions today, and also your just continued support  
15 for our youth. Regarding our needs from DYCD, we're  
16 in coalition for the Coalition for Homeless Youth. We  
17 co-sign everything that they said, and I'll put all  
18 that in more detail into my written testimony. I want  
19 to quickly lift up the 21-plus beds though. Our wait  
20 lists have grown significantly over the last six  
21 months. 21-plus youth are relying on our drop-in  
22 centers for months while waiting for a safe place to  
23 stay. There is no fast and safe alternative for 21-  
24 plus youth. Actually, our case managers reported to  
25 me this week that DHS's Marsh House, the LGBTQ

1 shelter, started requiring psych evals and  
2 psychosocials just to interview our youth, and so  
3 that's making it way less possible for our youth to  
4 have an alternative outside of a DYCD program so that  
5 needs to be prioritized. If you do nothing else for  
6 us, we need those beds, and it's especially really,  
7 really important for our trans young people, and  
8 having a 21-plus till, we have an under 21 trans  
9 till, and having one for our 21 and over trans youth  
10 would be also a great asset to our youth not having  
11 to then go back into an emergency program and on a  
12 waitlist. Additionally, our programs are responding  
13 to new crisis at every moment, and so being able to  
14 possibly change the beds that we already have to be  
15 21-plus or under 21, depending on what the need is in  
16 that moment, not even adding more online, would be  
17 also a really great addition.

19 For the rest of my time, I want to also  
20 focus on ACS. We just started a campaign about the  
21 rampant homophobia and transphobia that is happening  
22 within ACS, and they are not putting enough resources  
23 behind addressing this issue. We have had staff  
24 misgender a dead name and refuse to change it. The  
25 training is inadequate. There's not enough follow

1 through, and I'll put more in my written testimony,  
2 but this is a huge deal that needs really a lot more  
3 resources from them. Thank you.  
4

5 SEBASTIEN VONTE: Good afternoon. My name  
6 is Sebastien Vonte, and I am the Associate Vice  
7 President of Street Work Programs at Safe Horizon,  
8 the nation's largest non-profit victim services  
9 organization. Safe Horizon helps 250,000 New Yorkers  
10 each year who have experienced violence and abuse.

11 Since 2021, almost 600 youth and young  
12 adults have exited homelessness and moved into their  
13 own apartments with the assistance of a housing  
14 voucher and a DYCD-funded housing navigator. The  
15 housing navigators were created in 2021 to help New  
16 Yorkers find and move into housing with EHV Section 8  
17 vouchers. The current housing navigators at the DYCD-  
18 funded drop-in centers are temporarily funded through  
19 the end of June. Data shows the success and the  
20 return on investment of housing navigators. A record  
21 number of young people have exited homelessness and  
22 moved into their own apartments. Since the creation  
23 of the housing navigator position, there has been a  
24 200 percent increase in youth being discharged from  
25 youth shelters into their own affordable apartments.

1  
2 Defunding these positions will effectively close this  
3 pathway out of homelessness for vulnerable young New  
4 Yorkers. It would be devastating for DYCD programs to  
5 lose our only housing-dedicated jobs and return to  
6 the status quo of not being able to connect our  
7 clients with housing. At Safe Horizon Street Work  
8 Project, we helped connect over 200 of our clients to  
9 housing vouchers in the last three years. Of those,  
10 188 have moved into their own apartments to date. Of  
11 the 188 apartments that our clients were able to  
12 obtain with their housing vouchers, our program's two  
13 phenomenal housing navigators found and connected  
14 clients to 169 of those apartments. There were 19  
15 apartments that our housing navigators did not find  
16 but still helped our clients lease up. With the  
17 elimination of the only City-funded position  
18 specifically funded and trained to assist homeless  
19 youth in accessing permanent housing, how many young  
20 people will be able to move into apartments? How many  
21 will be unable to find and move into apartments and  
22 will therefore lose not only their housing vouchers  
23 but their chance to exit homelessness? We all know  
24 that prolonged homelessness is expensive for the  
25 City. Defunding these positions will not save the

1 City any money in the long run as homeless youth  
2 without a pathway out of homelessness become  
3 chronically homeless adults. Youth need housing. They  
4 need CityFHEPS vouchers and they need housing  
5 navigators. Our drop-in centers have been nothing  
6 short of extraordinary in their efforts to meet the  
7 growing needs of our newly arrived youth and  
8 unaccompanied minors. Despite this remarkable  
9 dedication, our team has been operating without  
10 additional support. We need at least 30 percent  
11 increase for DYCD-funded drop-in center contracts.  
12 This additional funding will enable us to meet the  
13 needs of our young people and ensure more appropriate  
14 staffing across all sites. Lastly, the City also  
15 underfunds our RHY residential contracts falling  
16 short of covering actual costs. We urge for an  
17 increase in funding to ensure that all current crisis  
18 and transitional independent living program contracts  
19 are adjusted to adequately cover operational costs  
20 and provide a 10 percent increase for all residential  
21 agreements. Thank you.

22  
23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

24 RAMON LECLERC: Good afternoon. My name is  
25 Ramon LeClerc. I represent New Alternatives for

1 Homeless LGBTQ Youth. Nine years ago, back in 2015,  
2 the City Council at that time passed a law, I don't  
3 remember the Local Law number, I apologize, requiring  
4 DYCD to fund 21- to 24-year-old beds. There's been no  
5 movement in nine years. Only two providers currently,  
6 and one, Ali Forney, is actually funded privately and  
7 not by DYCD for the 21 to 24-year-olds (INAUDIBLE) is  
8 funded privately, and we have a crisis with 21- to  
9 24-year-olds living on the streets, the trains,  
10 sleeping on park benches, especially with the Supreme  
11 Court matter, in this unjust Supreme Court's hands  
12 right now challenging the legality of arresting  
13 homeless people just for being unhoused. It's  
14 extremely dangerous, and I encourage the City Council  
15 to really sink their teeth in DYCD. At the time,  
16 their excuse was that they don't want to merge 16- to  
17 20-year-olds with 21- to 24-year-olds due to the 21-  
18 to 24-year-olds being bad influences, and I actually  
19 asked Ms. Haskell, who was working for DYCD at the  
20 time, what's the difference of the influence between  
21 the 21- to 24-year-olds over the 16- to 20-year-olds  
22 and sending the 21- to 24-year-olds to DHS shelters  
23 where there's 40-, 50-, 60-, 70-year-old people who  
24 have severe criminal records, some, and housing and  
25



1 allowing those people to influence the 21- to 24-  
2 year-olds. The housing navigators are extremely  
3 important, and I just want to say this, Mayor Adams'  
4 edict to not allow sleeping in drop-in centers is  
5 extremely dangerous, and it's depriving our youth of  
6 a human need. If you have nowhere else to lay your  
7 head and you fall asleep in the chair, or if you have  
8 cots, I don't see nothing wrong with allowing our  
9 young people to sleep. Thank you.  
10

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank  
12 you all very much.

13 Okay, next panel is Edwin Santana, Ellie  
14 Rutkey, Roslyn Morrison, Scott Daly, Tené Howard.

15 SCOTT DALY: Thank you, Chair Brannan,  
16 Stevens, and Members of the Committee for the Council  
17 and for the support you've given to NYJTL over the  
18 last five decades. My name is Scott Daly, and I'm a  
19 Senior Director of NYJTL's free tennis programs  
20 throughout the City of New York. With the City's  
21 finances in such good shape, we hope we're going to  
22 get, we're looking for an increase in the FY25  
23 budget. We are seeking 1 million dollars this year  
24 under the Council's Physical Education and Fitness  
25 Initiative. This would be an increase of 200,000

1 dollars over last year. This would be our first  
2 increase in 16 years. I know I don't have to tell  
3 anybody here that over these past 16 years, cost for  
4 everything has skyrocketed. Staggering rates are what  
5 we are facing now. One dollar today buys only 69  
6 cents of what it did in 2008. It's becoming  
7 challenging for us to continue the level of  
8 programming that everybody's expecting from us at the  
9 current level of funding, especially since we do not  
10 get the COLA increases as in other agencies. In order  
11 to keep up with these costs and to continue to pay  
12 our staff a living wage and to prevent cuts, we need  
13 the increase in funding. It is vital to our  
14 continuation. It is our belief that talent is  
15 universal, but that opportunity and access is not.  
16 That's what we're able to provide with the Council's  
17 help. We have done this for 53 years. Since we are  
18 partners, we are the largest tennis and educational  
19 program in the country. It's all due to the Council's  
20 support. Through the free programming, we reach over  
21 90,000 children in under-resourced areas of the city.  
22 We are in all five boroughs of the city. 80 percent  
23 of our population of those who registered with us are  
24 Black, Latino, and Asian. 70 percent are 10 years old  
25

1 or younger. During the pandemic, when everything was  
2 closed down, we opened up in August and provided  
3 services to these kids. We now need the help of the  
4 City Council. Increased funding to NYJTL in Fiscal  
5 Year '25 budget is crucial to our vision and that of  
6 our founder, Arthur Ashe. With your continued  
7 support, we know we can change the lives of thousands  
8 of children in the City of New York. Thank you very  
9 much for your time.  
10

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Scott.

12 SCOTT DALY: Thank you.

13 ANNIE MINGUEZ: Thank you, Chair Brannan  
14 and Chair Stevens for the opportunity to testify  
15 today. My name is Annie Minguez, and I am the Vice  
16 President of Government and Community Relations for  
17 Good Shepherd Services. We contract with both ACS and  
18 DYCD on a number of programs. At a time when our city  
19 is still recovering from the pandemic, we should be  
20 talking about fortifying services and investing in  
21 programs that are helping our city recover. The  
22 Mayor's November Plan, January Plan, and the  
23 Executive Budget cut many critical services, not only  
24 for this Fiscal Year, but the outyears. We need those  
25 funds restored. During this time, we should not be

1 cutting services that are a beacon to youth and  
2 families across the city. We need investments, not  
3 divestments. Families need childcare for undocumented  
4 parents, adult literacy, afterschool, summer  
5 programming for middle school students, counseling  
6 services for families, legal supports to help youth  
7 and families and cure violence, supports for youth  
8 experiencing homelessness. This is not services we  
9 want. These are services that we need. Children and  
10 youth should not be the ones to carry the burden of  
11 the City's financial crisis. I want to thank the  
12 Council for ensuring, as part of your Council  
13 response, that we are protecting children and youth  
14 at all costs. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 testify.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

18 TENÉ HOWARD: Good afternoon, everyone,  
19 and especially to Council Member Brannan and Council  
20 Member Stevens. My name is Tené Howard. I'm the  
21 Executive Director at Sadie Nash Leadership Project,  
22 a youth development organization working here in New  
23 York City. Our mission is to strengthen, empower, and  
24 equip young women and gender-expansive youth of color  
25 as agents of change in their lives and in the world.

1 We use popular education along with lots of other  
2 strategies in our afterschool and summer leadership  
3 development programs to build community, critical  
4 consciousness, and college and career readiness, and  
5 we are a part of the STARS CGI group, Sports Training  
6 and Role Models Success Citywide Girls Initiative. We  
7 are really proud of the fact that STARS, for the last  
8 10 years, STARS CGI has been serving girls and  
9 gender-expansive youth all over New York City, doing  
10 incredible programming to make sure that they have  
11 spaces for community, for connection, and for their  
12 own growth and development. Our organizations are a  
13 lifeline for young people. It's through our  
14 organizations that young people are gaining  
15 opportunities to sustain and be resilient in these  
16 continually unprecedented times. In December 2021,  
17 the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on  
18 protecting youth mental health in recognition of the  
19 impact of COVID on young people's mental health and  
20 well-being. Certain groups of young people,  
21 especially black and Latino youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and  
22 youth from low-income and immigrant households are  
23 often at a greater risk for these mental health and  
24 well-being challenges. This is confirmed by our own  
25

1 experiences with NASHers, the young people in our  
2 programs. It is programs like Sadie Nash Leadership  
3 Project and the support that we receive from STARS  
4 CGI that's enabled us to show up for our young  
5 people, both because of the continuing impact of the  
6 COVID-19 crisis, and in response to the current  
7 global crisis so many of our young people find  
8 themselves experiencing. It is imperative that our  
9 programs are funded so that we can continue the proud  
10 work we've done to really expand the programming,  
11 meet their needs, and create new opportunities for  
12 healing and self-care for these young people. We're  
13 so proud of what we're doing to create a just and  
14 joyful New York City in partnership with the young  
15 people in our programs, and we're hopeful that you  
16 will continue to invest deeply in these young women  
17 and gender-expansive youth who are not just the  
18 future of our city, but are creating change now.  
19 Thank you.

20  
21 ELLIE RUTKEY: Good afternoon. My name is  
22 Ellie Rutkey, and I'm a lawyer with the Door's Legal  
23 Services Center. The Door is a comprehensive youth  
24 development organization and houses a DYCD drop-in  
25 center. Our Legal Services Center specializes in

1 serving young people in their immigration cases. As  
2 my written testimony details, the young people that  
3 we work with at the Door are extremely vulnerable and  
4 are in desperate need of support from the City. For  
5 example, at a recent drop-in legal clinic for runaway  
6 homeless youth, Door staff members spoke with an 18-  
7 year-old who was forced to leave his home country  
8 after police officers shot and killed his mother in  
9 front of him due to her political activity. Another  
10 young person who we met at the clinic has fled his  
11 home country after years of experiencing extreme  
12 physical abuse and death threats from his father.  
13 Unhoused young people like these two young adults  
14 need access to safety, stability, and services  
15 offered in youth shelters. There's a severe shortage  
16 of youth shelter beds and, as a result, an alarming  
17 number of unhoused young people ages 18 to 24 are  
18 instead placed in HERRCs. HERRCs are inappropriate  
19 environments for young people because they lack  
20 privacy, do not provide sufficient food, offer  
21 practically no support services, and continuously  
22 displace residents. It is impossible for already  
23 vulnerable youth to find stability and community  
24 within the HERRC system, and so I urge the City to  
25

1 fund additional DYCD youth shelter beds. In addition,  
2 young people without legal status, particularly those  
3 living in shelter, need access to free immigration  
4 legal services. Door staff members regularly turn  
5 away young immigrants with strong claims for legal  
6 relief. Just last month, we received over 50 requests  
7 for help, and we have over 200 young people just  
8 waiting for an initial appointment. If the City does  
9 not provide funding to remedy the current shortage of  
10 legal services providers, especially those dedicated  
11 to unhoused youth, an unacceptable number of young  
12 people who are eligible for immigration relief will  
13 not receive necessary legal help and instead will be  
14 ordered removed to a country where their well-being,  
15 and sometimes lives, will be at risk. Thus, I urge  
16 the City to fund youth-specific, no-cost immigration  
17 legal services. Thank you.

18  
19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

20 ROSLYN MORRISON: Good afternoon, Chair  
21 Brannan, Chair Stevens, and the entire panel. Thank  
22 you for this opportunity and inviting us to share our  
23 testimony. I'm Roslyn Morrison. I'm a Senior Attorney  
24 at the Legal Aid Society in the Community Justice  
25 Unit. My colleague, co-supervising attorney, Michelle



1 Fields, handed up our written materials, which will  
2 go to supplement the testimony that I'll provide.  
3 While we appreciate the positive recognition for  
4 Mayor Adams' Administration regarding the  
5 effectiveness of the crisis management teams, the  
6 proposed 1.5-million-dollar cut in funding to CJU's  
7 supportive legal services is deeply concerning and  
8 potentially disruptive. This cut is a significant  
9 setback in our efforts to maintain and enhance public  
10 safety and community well-being. It is crucial to  
11 recognize that undermining CJU is tantamount to  
12 undermining the entire framework of CMS, which has  
13 been pivotal in reducing gun and gang violence across  
14 the city. Recent data from the New York City Council  
15 data team underscores the success of the CMS Cure  
16 Violence Model, with an 18.1 percent reduction in  
17 shootings in areas serviced by the program in the  
18 first year alone, and now those reductions have been  
19 sustained at the level of 16 to 19 percent in  
20 subsequent years. These statistics are a clear  
21 testament to the effectiveness of these initiatives  
22 in saving lives, in disrupting violence, enhancing  
23 public safety, and instilling confidence in the  
24 continued success of CMS and CJU. Moreover, as  
25

1 documented in Exhibit Z, letters of support from our  
2 CMS organizations, feedback from community  
3 organizations highlights the critical nature of CJU's  
4 services. These organizations attest to the fact that  
5 CJU's legal support is fundamental to their  
6 operations and successful in reducing gun and gang  
7 violence. The legal education workshops conducted by  
8 CJU have also been praised by members of the Mayor's  
9 Action Plan and the Office of Neighborhood Safety,  
10 who recognize these services as essential components  
11 of the broader strategy to increase public safety. In  
12 conclusion, in light of the above, it is evident that  
13 any reduction to funding of CJU directly contradicts  
14 the historical mission of CMS and, by extension, the  
15 City's commitment to eradicating gun and gang  
16 violence. Therefore, we urge the Administration to  
17 reconsider its stance and restore total funding to  
18 CJU. Doing so will ensure the continuation and  
19 expansion of crucial legal services that have proven  
20 effective in making our most marginalized communities  
21 far safer. We stand with the founders and supporters  
22 of the CMS movement in advocating for fully supported  
23 CJU as an integral part of our strategy to reduce gun  
24 and gang violence. I'll close by noting that we're  
25

1 looking forward to the meeting on Monday with DYCD.

2 I'll note that our organization had made numerous

3 attempts, numerous outreach to DYCD immediately

4 following the March 22nd hearings without much

5 success until recently. We had hoped to have been

6 able to meet with them prior to today's hearing.

7 Nonetheless, we are pleased that we'll be meeting

8 with them on Monday at noon, and we look forward to

9 sharing the results of that meeting. Thank you.

10  
11 CO-CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yes, please

12 follow me about the meeting. Appreciate it.

13 ROSLYN MORRISON: Will do.

14 EDWIN SANTANA: Thank you, Chair Stevens

15 and the Youth Services Committee Members. My name is

16 Edwin Santana, and I'm a Community Organizer at

17 Freedom Agenda and a member. I believe that the City

18 budget should reflect what we value, and I believe

19 that most New Yorkers value our youth. If we value

20 our youth, then we should invest in the programs and

21 services that serve our youth, but Mayor Adams seems

22 to have a different priority. He's slashing funding

23 for everything that supports our youth and doubling

24 down on arresting and incarcerating them. It's

25 shameful. It's also not going to do anything to drive

1 crime down. I can tell you from my own experience as  
2 a person who entered juvenile detention at 13 and 15  
3 years old, instead of giving me the proper services  
4 to help me in my youth, I was incarcerated, and all  
5 that did was expose me to horrors that come with the  
6 criminal justice system. The same is happening with  
7 the youth today. Let us not forget that there are  
8 over 1,000 young people, 25 and under, at Rikers  
9 Island today. Incarceration is not the answer, but  
10 that is what Eric Adams wants us to believe. The  
11 Mayor's budget proposes cutting millions from the  
12 Department of Youth and Community Development. That  
13 includes huge cuts to the Office of Neighborhood  
14 Safety for things like cure violence programs,  
15 employment programs, as well as legal services and  
16 recreational events, but you know what he's not  
17 cutting? The Department of Correction. Even though  
18 they have four times more officers per person in  
19 custody than average jail system, and even though  
20 they are the only City agency that is actually  
21 required to shrink in the next three years under the  
22 plan to close Rikers, Rikers is a hellhole. Rikers,  
23 especially for people behind the walls, but for  
24 people who work there too, so DOC is expected to have  
25

1 over 1,400 vacancies this year, and the Mayor isn't  
2 planning to cut any of them. He keeps saying he  
3 expects the jail population to rise, but that's not  
4 inevitable. It's his policies that are designed to  
5 create that outcome. I know, and the City Council  
6 knows, that this is the wrong path, and I want to  
7 thank you for calling on the Mayor to restore funding  
8 cuts to DYCD and other services that support our  
9 youth. If the Mayor won't agree to those changes in  
10 the budget, we urge the City Council to use every  
11 power you have, including passing a budget amendment  
12 to ensure a just budget for our city. In the full  
13 written testimony I will submit, you'll see a full  
14 budget analysis from the Campaign to Close Rikers  
15 that calls on the City Council to cut DOC's bloated  
16 budget and redirect those resources to our youth and  
17 our communities. Thank you. Happy Mother's Day to  
18 everyone here. Happy Mother's Day to the mothers on  
19 Rikers Island and in DOC custody. Peace.

20  
21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all  
22 very much.

23 Okay, our next panel we've got on Zoom,  
24 starting with Diana Imbert.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has started.

1  
2                   DIANA IMBERT: Hi, I'm sorry. I know the  
3 timer just started. I was unable to speak actually  
4 due to being muted.

5                   CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, go ahead.

6                   DIANA IMBERT: Thank you. Thank you for  
7 the opportunity to discuss the need for continued  
8 funding for Promise New York City. My name is Diana  
9 Imbert, and I'm a Staff Attorney for the Early  
10 Childhood Education Project at Advocates for Children  
11 of New York. We were pleased when the City launched  
12 Promise New York City in January of 2023 to increase  
13 access to early childhood programs for children who  
14 are undocumented. Unfortunately, the Mayor's  
15 Executive Budget does not include funding to continue  
16 this vital initiative, and hundreds of children risk  
17 being turned away from their programs this summer if  
18 the funding does not continue. Many early childhood  
19 programs including New York City Public Schools,  
20 infant and toddler programs, as well as 3K and pre-K  
21 programs that offer extended hours require families  
22 to qualify for subsidized childcare assistance to  
23 enroll. These programs have historically excluded  
24 children who are undocumented as they are not  
25 eligible for this subsidy based on state and federal

1 restrictions. Since the launch of Promise New York  
2 City, hundreds of families of children who are  
3 undocumented have been able to access a variety of  
4 early childhood programs. From its inception, demand  
5 has exceeded capacity and we know that several  
6 hundred other families have contacted agencies  
7 seeking care for their young children through Promise  
8 New York City but have been turned away due to a lack  
9 of funding. Unfortunately, all funding for Promise  
10 New York City is set to expire in June, which will  
11 result in children losing seats in their programs and  
12 new families being unable to apply. At a time when  
13 New York City has seen a substantial increase in  
14 immigrant families, the City should be increasing,  
15 and certainly not eliminating, funding for this  
16 initiative so that children are not excluded from  
17 programs based on their immigration status. Promise  
18 New York City is critical for helping to prepare  
19 newly arrived children for success in elementary  
20 school and beyond, and it can also be transformative  
21 for parents by enabling them to work or study,  
22 connect with resources, and settle in their new  
23 communities. We join in the recommendation made by  
24 the City Council in its response to the Preliminary  
25

1 Budget in calling on the City to allocate and  
2 baseline 25 million in the Administration for  
3 Children's Services budget for Promise New York City.  
4 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.  
5 I would be happy to answer any questions.  
6

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now we  
8 have Sierra Craft.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has started.

10 SIERRA KRAFT: Good afternoon. Thank you,  
11 Chair Stevens and Chair Brannan for inviting this  
12 testimony. My name is Sierra Kraft, and I'm the  
13 Executive Director of ICARE, a coalition of legal  
14 service organizations, a few of whom you've heard of  
15 already today. We are dedicated to providing free  
16 representation to unaccompanied immigrant children  
17 facing deportation in New York City while advocating  
18 for universal access to counsel. Today, I'm here to  
19 request additional funding for the ICARE coalition  
20 for the Unaccompanied Minors and Families Initiative.  
21 So many of the young people we're serving are  
22 eligible for special immigrant juvenile status, a  
23 critical form of relief that provides a pathway to  
24 permanency, work authorization, and a green card.  
25 However, this relief is only available until their



1  
2 21st birthday, and our complex immigration and family  
3 court systems necessitate skilled non-profit  
4 attorneys to support these young individuals with  
5 their applications so it's critical that we increase  
6 our capacity to deploy trained attorneys who  
7 specialize in youth cases to ensure timely and  
8 effective submissions in family court. Thanks to the  
9 support from City Council through the UMFI  
10 Initiative, ICARE has successfully stood by over  
11 12,000 immigrants in the past 10 years, and these  
12 children represented by attorneys achieve a success  
13 rate of over 90 percent in winning their cases, which  
14 opens doors to higher education, meaningful careers,  
15 and leadership roles in the city they now call home  
16 but, despite the success, our funding hasn't  
17 increased in over five years, even though the demand  
18 for services continues to grow so thousands of young  
19 people in New York City are in urgent need of legal  
20 support and the time is really ticking on what  
21 options they have available to avoid deportation, and  
22 the current funding levels are just insufficient to  
23 meet the needs so we're calling upon the City to  
24 prioritize and increase funding for ICARE. We're  
25 urgently in need of 5.7 million this Fiscal Year to

1 serve over 1,800 children through comprehensive legal  
2 screenings, Know Your Rights training, direct  
3 representation and referrals to essential City and  
4 social services.  
5

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired, thank  
7 you.

8 SIERRA KRAFT: Thank you.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,  
10 Sierra.

11 Now we have Lisa Crook.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

13 LISA CROOK: Good afternoon, my name is  
14 Lisa Crook, and I'm the Chief Program Officer at  
15 Covenant House New York where we serve youth  
16 experiencing homelessness. I would like to thank the  
17 New York City Council Committee on Finance and the  
18 Committee on Children and Youth for the opportunity  
19 to submit testimony today and for your ongoing  
20 recognition of the critical needs facing migrant and  
21 unhoused youth.

22 Covenant House stands as a beacon of hope  
23 for over 1,600 young people annually, providing more  
24 than just shelter, we offer a pathway to stability.  
25 Our comprehensive approach includes essential

1 services such as food, shelter, medical care and  
2 crucial legal assistance alongside educational and  
3 vocational training. This holistic model is crucial  
4 now more than ever as we witness a significant rise  
5 in the number of migrant youth seeking refuge in our  
6 city due to ongoing global crises. We are deeply  
7 grateful to the City Council for its continued  
8 support and acknowledgement of the challenges faced  
9 by these vulnerable populations. Your commitment has  
10 been instrumental in empowering organizations like  
11 ours to make a significant impact. As the demand for  
12 our services grows, particularly in legal support and  
13 comprehensive care, a resolve to meet these needs  
14 with your support is more vital than ever. In recent  
15 years, New York City has seen an unprecedented  
16 increase in migrant youth arrivals, many of whom are  
17 escaping violence, poverty, and political  
18 instability. These young individuals arrive with  
19 profound needs, language barriers, lack of  
20 documentation, and often a history of trauma. Their  
21 situations are compounded by their ineligibility for  
22 work which severely limits their ability to sustain  
23 themselves. At Covenant House, we strive to address  
24 these challenges but the demand far outstrips our  
25

1  
2 current capacity. We continue to see an increased  
3 demand for specialized legal services, crucial for  
4 this group of migrant youth. These challenges range  
5 from immigration issues such as applying for asylum  
6 or navigating special immigrant juvenile status  
7 process to more routine legal needs that impact their  
8 ability to work, study, and live securely in our  
9 community. We propose the following critical  
10 investments, fund support services for new arrivals.  
11 This funding is crucial to enhance our capacity to  
12 provide multilingual support and direct services,  
13 ensuring that our residential and supportive  
14 programming, not just at Covenant House, but  
15 statewide..

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time expired.  
17 Thank you.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now we  
19 have Denise Taylor.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

21 DENISE TAYLOR: Thank you, Chair Stevens,  
22 Chair Brannan, and the Children and Youth Committee  
23 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Denise  
24 Taylor, and I'm a Program Director at Brooklyn  
25 Transitions Family Treatment Rehabilitation Program

1 with Good Shepherd Services. My testimony today will  
2 focus on the urgent need to address the ongoing  
3 workforce crisis severely impacting child welfare  
4 prevention programs across the city and our call for  
5 greater investment to create salary parity with ACS  
6 and other City agencies having similar positions.  
7 We're all aware of the great resignation that took  
8 place during and post pandemic, which drastically  
9 impacted many fields, including human services in the  
10 child welfare. While other fields and sectors have  
11 regained their workforce, the prevention programs  
12 continue to struggle significantly. Personally, at my  
13 program, among other positions, I've had six social  
14 worker case worker vacancies for over a year and have  
15 unable to hire for them. It is not a result of a lack  
16 of recruitment efforts as I have gone on over six job  
17 fairs that have had several qualified candidates who  
18 have declined the positions due to low salaries,  
19 which are not competitive and manageable for the  
20 current cost of living in New York City. The low  
21 workforce has significantly negatively impacted  
22 program and, as a result, we've closed one  
23 (INAUDIBLE) functioning prevention program in  
24 Brooklyn and have decreased the slots in the FTR  
25

1 program in the Bronx. These closures are a result of  
2 the low utilization, which is due to staff vacancies,  
3 not based on the lack of family service need. We have  
4 not been able to accommodate the needs of the  
5 community based on not having adequate staff. At this  
6 time...

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

9 Thank you.

10 DENISE TAYLOR: I have six vacancies.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now,  
12 we have Gabby Cadahia.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has started.

14 GABBY CADAHIA: Good afternoon. My name is  
15 Gabby Cadahia, and I'm the Development Officer at New  
16 York Edge. Thank you, Chairs Brannan and Stevens and  
17 Members of the Committee, for the Council's  
18 longstanding support of New York Edge. With the  
19 City's finances in much better shape than expected in  
20 January, we ask that the Council increase our funding  
21 in the Fiscal Year '25 budget. We are seeking 1.2  
22 million under the Council's Afterschool Enrichment  
23 Initiative, an increase of 200,000 over last year,  
24 and this would be our first increase in 16 years. We  
25 are also seeking 250,000 under the Council's Social

1 and Emotional Supports for Students Initiative. SEL  
2 is integrated into every element of our programming  
3 and increased funding is vitally needed. Unlike  
4 contracts with DYCD and other agencies, Council  
5 discretionary contracts are not eligible for COLA  
6 increases, and this is making it increasingly  
7 difficult for New York Edge to attract and maintain  
8 the quality staff that continues to offer the wide  
9 array of programs that we're known for. We are the  
10 largest provider of free school-based afterschool and  
11 summer programming in New York City, serving almost  
12 30,000 students in 133 schools in 37 of the 51  
13 Council Districts throughout the five boroughs, and  
14 our mission is to help bridge the opportunity gap  
15 among students in underinvested communities. Our free  
16 summer programs will begin in early July, providing  
17 over 10,000 young New Yorkers with a summer camp  
18 experience on par with the best private pay camps in  
19 the city, improving health and wellness, developing  
20 social skills, and preventing summer learning loss,  
21 and Council citywide funding has enabled us to enrich  
22 and expand our school year and summer programs and  
23 develop and implement new, unique and engaging  
24 programs. New York Edge, its students and families  
25

1  
2 are extremely grateful for the Council's 32 years of  
3 support and partnership, but we're now looking to you  
4 to meet the needs of the next generation..

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.  
6 Thank you.

7 GABBY CADAHIA: Supporting our Fiscal Year  
8 '25 funding requests. Thank you very much.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now,  
10 we have Alex Malescio.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is starting.

12 ALEX MALESCIO: Chair Stevens, Brannan,  
13 and Members of the City Council, good afternoon. My  
14 name is Alex Malescio and I'm the Senior Director of  
15 Government Relations at Urban Upbound, AKA East River  
16 Development Alliance. Like many of my colleagues in  
17 the non-profit sector, I'm here today to advocate for  
18 the inclusion of funding in the City's budget to  
19 support programs that address the root causes of  
20 poverty and mitigate its social ills, which often  
21 affect youth the most, including violence and the  
22 exclusion from economic opportunity. Specifically, we  
23 at Urban Upbound have found that the following  
24 programs have the greatest impact on youth, career-  
25 focused workforce development, a high percentage of



1 youth today are seeking meaningful careers that  
2 promise a living wage, including coding, engineering  
3 and construction trades. This context workforce  
4 development involves programs such as high school  
5 tutoring and college preparation, soft skills,  
6 including resume building, interview prep, career  
7 planning and retention counseling and hard skills  
8 training, including connections to free highly  
9 technical courses.  
10

11 Entrepreneurship services. Many youth  
12 today are particularly attracted to the independence  
13 and opportunity associated with starting a business.  
14 Technical assistance services provide budding  
15 entrepreneurs with the support needed to manage their  
16 businesses finances, operation, marketing, and vendor  
17 relations and administrative responsibilities. Urban  
18 Upbound specializes in providing business strategy  
19 consulting to worker cooperatives, an innovative  
20 business model that facilitates worker equity.

21 Financial inclusion is both the  
22 prerequisite and a goal of workforce and business  
23 development, regardless of whether they are in crisis  
24 mode or are furthering in their journey towards  
25 financial independence. Youth need access to one-on-

one counseling and services that address debt,  
credit, financial planning, taxes and benefits.  
Access to safe and affordable banking through  
community-based institutions, such as the Urban  
Upbound Federal Credit Union is also key.

Finally, youth should have access to  
mental wellness services that address the emotions  
and challenges that can arise during career and  
financial growth. Services such as sessions with...

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is expired.

Thank you.

ALEX MALESCIO: Thank you.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Now,  
we have Peter Tarson.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is starting.

PETER TARSON: All right, thank you so  
much. I'm gravely concerned by the potential cuts to  
social services that we've been discussing here. The  
basic aspects of childhood from field trips and  
daycare to responding to the dire crisis in runaway  
and homeless youth housing. I want to beg the Council  
to restore these services and to advance a proposal  
for an institution that we can cut in order to  
achieve this, namely the NYPD Strategic Response

1 Group. The NYPD Strategic Response Group was created  
2 as a counterterrorism unit but has completely  
3 transitioned away from that obligation into the  
4 forcible repression of protests, including peaceful  
5 ones, and the clearing of homeless camps that only  
6 exist due to prior cuts in social services for the  
7 unhoused population, and the violent tactics that the  
8 SRG uses preemptively are outlined in its handbook,  
9 which instructs SRG to respond to peaceful protests  
10 from certain political movements, for example, the  
11 Black Lives Matter movement, as well as back during  
12 the presidency of Donald Trump, any opposition to him  
13 was also in this category as if they were violent  
14 protests. There's a list surrounding movements  
15 meriting violence rather than a mere criteria for  
16 determining a violent protest. The SRG has been  
17 completely failing to actually de-escalate violence  
18 or danger as exists in our city. It is the product of  
19 the broken windows policing philosophy, which places  
20 an extreme emphasis on property over the sanctity of  
21 human dignity or life. It has forcibly undressed  
22 people, beaten non-resisting protesters and  
23 bystanders at protests such as legal observers, and  
24 its members have frequently been overheard expressing  
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2 a desire to use lethal force and bemoaning the fact  
3 that they're not permitted to in a certain situation.  
4 We have seen this recently in the response to the  
5 student encampments. The SRG has brought in violence  
6 when there has been peaceful civil disobedience and,  
7 if there has ever been a situation of unsafety at an  
8 encampment, they have not responded by de-escalating  
9 conflict but have violently persecuted the groups at  
10 the encampments.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Your time has  
12 expired. Thank you.

13 PETER TARSON: Okay, take care.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very  
15 much.

16 Okay, with that, day five of FY25  
17 Executive Budget hearings is adjourned. Thank you.  
18 Have a good weekend. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 15, 2024