

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE,

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES,

COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

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May 15, 2017

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
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Stephen T. Levin
Chairperson

Laurie A. Cumbo
Chairperson

Fernando Cabrera
Chairperson

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

Letitia James
Public Advocate

Steven Banks
HRA/DHS Commissioner

David Hansell
ACS Commissioner

Susan Nuccio
Deputy Commissioner for Financial Services ACS

Felipe Franco
Deputy Commissioner for Youth and Family Justice
at ACS

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

Lorelei Vargas

Deputy Commissioner for Early Care and Education
at ACS

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Good
3 morning and welcome to today's Finance Committee
4 hearing. My name is Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. I'm
5 the Chair of the Committee. I want to begin by
6 thanking my Co-Chair, Chair Steve Levin, and the
7 members of the General Welfare Committee for joining
8 us today. I want to acknowledge the members of both
9 committees who are here. We're been joined by
10 Minority Leader Matteo, Council Members Perkins,
11 Grodenchik, and Cabrera. This morning, the
12 Committee continues its look at the Mayor's Fiscal
13 2018 Executive Budget with the Human Resources
14 Administration and the Department of Homeless
15 Services. We will hear from Commissioner of Social
16 Services Steve Banks to discuss both agencies. I'll
17 begin with a brief overview of the HRA and DHS
18 budgets. HRA's Executive Budget for Fiscal 2018
19 totals approximately 9.8 billion dollars, an increase
20 of 95.6 million over the agency's Fiscal 2017 Adopted
21 Budget. This includes 38.7 million in new needs for
22 Fiscal Year 2018, a significant amount of which is
23 designated for legal services. HRA's Capital
24 Commitment Plan for Fiscal 2018 is 154.4 million, the
25 majority of which will fund technology upgrades and

2 building improvements. For DHS, the agency's
3 Executive Budget totals 1.6 billion, 311 million more
4 than the agency's Fiscal 17's Adopted Budget. The
5 agency's Capital Commitment Plan totals 136 million,
6 primarily for repairs and upgrades at homeless family
7 and single adult facilities. With respect to DHS,
8 the Council was pleased a 36.2 million in Fiscal 2018
9 growing to 71 million by Fiscal 2020, included in the
10 budget for contract rate adjustments for homeless
11 shelter providers. As the Council has highlighted,
12 it is critical that the Human Services contract be
13 right-sized to better reflect the actual cost of
14 providing services. DHS took an important step to
15 work with the shelter providers to ensure they have
16 the proper funding to meet service goals in the
17 coming fiscal year. I look forward to discussing
18 lessons from this process that other social service
19 agencies may be able to apply with their providers.
20 However, I believe that there are other areas in both
21 budgets where improvements can be made. I'd first
22 note that the budgets of the three agencies we will
23 hear from today, HRA, DHS and ACS, make up
24 approximately 17 percent of the City's total Expense
25 Budget. With such significant commitments to support

2 vital city priorities, the need to effectively
3 understand and analyze agency expenditures becomes
4 even more crucial. However, the Administration
5 continues to make it difficult for both the Council
6 and the public to track its spending and measure
7 progress on various programs. This lack of
8 transparency is particularly the case when it comes
9 to the City's efforts to address homelessness. For
10 example, in the current fiscal year DHS transferred
11 homelessness prevention and rehousing programs to
12 HRA. Because funding for these programs budgeted
13 across multiple units of appropriation, it is
14 difficult to track them within HRA's budget.
15 Additionally, while the Mayor's recently homelessness
16 plan includes the creation of 90 new shelters and the
17 expansion of 30 more, DHS' Capital Plan does not
18 reflect these initiative. This lack of clarity is
19 similar with respect to the City's multiple rental
20 assistance programs. These programs are essential in
21 preventing individuals and families from becoming
22 homeless. While the Administration pledged to
23 streamline existing programs in its homelessness
24 plan, we still lack details about this proposal.
25 Without this information it is challenging to

2 determine exactly what the total city contribution

3 for rental assistance will be for Fiscal 2018.

4 Furthermore, the Administration continues its

5 practice of significantly underestimating shelter

6 cost, only to repeatedly add large amounts of funding

7 for shelter re-estimates at each plan. Since Fiscal

8 2017's adoption, funding for operations has been re-

9 estimated and increased by a total of 309.5 million

10 dollars for Fiscal 2017 and 376.4 million for Fiscal

11 18. I would urge the Administration to take a closer

12 look at how it assesses and plans for the anticipated

13 shelter needs to avoid such significant changes

14 throughout the fiscal year. I look forward to hearing

15 from these issues and more at today's hearing.

16 Before turning it over to my Co-Chair, I want to

17 thank the Finance Staff who helped prepare for this

18 hearing, Regina Poreda-Ryan, Nathan Toth, Dohini

19 Sompura, Nameera Nuzhat, and Eric Bernstein. I will

20 now turn it over to Chair Levin for his opening

21 remarks. Chair?

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,

23 Chair Ferreras-Copeland. Good morning everybody.

24 I'm Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of the

25 Committee on General Welfare. We're joined by

2 Committee Members Fernando Cabrera of the Bronx,
3 Barry Grodenchik of Queens and Finance Committee
4 Members Matteo and Perkins. I want to thank you,
5 Commissioner, for joining us today and I want to
6 thank the Chair of our Finance Committee, Julissa
7 Ferreras-Copeland and her staff, for preparing
8 today's hearing. Today we will be hearing, as Chair
9 Ferreras-Copeland said, from the three social
10 services agencies, Human Resources Administration,
11 Administration for Children's Services and Department
12 of Homeless Services on each of their Fiscal 18
13 budgets, Executive Budgets. The City's Fiscal 2018
14 Executive Budget totals 84.9 billion dollars of which
15 14.4 billion dollars funds HRA, ACS and DHS, or
16 roughly 17 percent of the City's total Expense Budget
17 for Fiscal 18. We will be asking each of these
18 agencies how new needs, various funding adjustments,
19 and new policies in their Fiscal 18 Executive Budget
20 will impact their ability to serve New Yorkers while
21 ensuring that the most vulnerable populations in the
22 City are receiving the assistance that they deserve.
23 We will begin with the joint testimony from the Human
24 Resources Administration and the Department of
25 Homeless Services. HRA provides cash assistance,

3 SNAP benefits, HIV/AIDS support services also
4 referred to as HASA, and many other public assistance
5 programs to aid low-income New Yorkers. HRA is also
6 ensure of the Homeless Prevention programs including
7 anti-eviction and tenant support legal services and
8 rental assistance programs for the homeless that work
9 in two ways, helping at-risk New Yorkers avoid
10 homelessness in the first place, and moving
11 individuals and families from shelter into permanent
12 housing. Following the 90-day review of the
13 Department of Homeless Services that was completed in
14 March of 2016, HRA started working in partnership
15 with DHS to provide emergency shelter, rehousing
16 support and services to single adults and families
17 with little to no alternative housing options. HRA
18 proposed-- HRA's proposed Fiscal 18 Executive Budget
19 totals 9.85 billion dollars. When compared to its
20 Fiscal 17 Adopted Budget, HRA's Fiscal 18 Executive
21 Budget increases by 95 million dollars. HRA's Fiscal
22 18 budget reflects commitments in homelessness
23 prevention through legal services and rental
24 assistance, domestic violence services, and improved
25 outreach in public engagement to connect to more New
Yorkers in need of services. However, the budget

does overlook at this point the plight of hungry New
Yorkers. Hunger is a very real issue in this City.
Each year, over 1.4 million New Yorkers rely on food
pantries and soup kitchens to feed themselves and
their families. The current level of SNAP benefits
are insufficient and there remains uncertainty from
the current Federal Administration surrounding the
SNAP program. Further, the implications of the waiver
for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependence, otherwise
known as ABAWD, timing out are also unclear at this
point. I'm very concerned that the inadequate
funding for the EFAP program, Emergency Food
Assistance Program, will put increased strain on the
city's Emergency Food Assistance Program in light of
a hostile administration in Washington. As the
homeless population continues to grow to
unprecedented levels in the City, so does the demand
for financial resources required to meet the need for
this vulnerable population. Department of Homeless
Services Fiscal 18 Executive Budget totals 1.6
billion dollars, 311 million more than DHS' Fiscal 17
Adopted Budget. This increase can largely be
attributed to new needs for the agency which include
additional shelter costs to accommodate the current

shelter census, more resources at intake centers to
accommodate the influx of shelter entrance, increased
investments in shelter security and outreach services
for street homeless. The City has been making
substantial investments in rental assistance and
anti-eviction legal services since Fiscal 2016 which
have made an impressive impact, but still have yet to
stem the tide of people and populations coming into
the shelter system. Earlier this year, the Mayor
unveiled a new borough-based plan to reduce the
footprint of New York City's homeless shelter system
and drive down the population of homeless New Yorkers
relying on shelter. This plan centers on creating 90
new shelters through contracts and expanding 30
under-utilized shelters through the Capital Plan.
The Council is still waiting for the Administration
to share the strategy for the implementation of this
plan. DHS' 10-Year Capital Strategy for 2018 to 2027
totals 650.3 million dollars in city funds, increase
of 300 million when compared to the preliminary 10-
Year Capital Strategy. This includes 437.2 million
dollars in the 2018 to 2021 four-year Capital Plan.
While turning the tide on homelessness, the strategy
of the de Blasio Administration mentions renovations

2 of the first sites-- mentions that renovations of the
3 first sites will begin in 2018 and take place on a
4 rolling basis over the next seven years. DHS'
5 capital plan does not reflect details of capacity
6 expansion. We request more transparency and
7 involvement in regards to this. During this hearing,
8 I would like to hear how DHS and HRA plan to address
9 the aforementioned issues and others that the City
10 faces at this point. And before I welcome the
11 commissioner, I'd like to thank Committee Staff for
12 their work, Nameera Nuzhat, Legislative Finance
13 Analyst, Dohini Sompura, Unit Head, Andrea Vazquez
14 [sp?], Counsel for the Committee, Tanya Cyrus, Policy
15 Analyst for the Committee in preparing this hearing.
16 I also want to thank my staff, Johnathan Bouche
17 [sp?], Chief of Staff, Ed Paulino, and Budget
18 Director, and also Julie Barrow, who up until Friday
19 was my Legislative Director and today is working for
20 City Ledge [sic]. I'd like to now thank and welcome
21 the DSS Commissioner, Steve Banks, for testimony.
22 And before you begin, can I ask anyone that's going
23 to be testifying to raise your right hand? Do you
24 swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth
25

2 and nothing but the truth and to answer Council
3 Member questions honestly?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Anyone that's going
6 to be testifying, you can affirm that. Thanks.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you. I'd like
8 to thank City Council's Finance and General Welfare
9 Committees and Chairs Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and
10 Steve Levin, for giving us this opportunity to
11 testify today about the budgets for the Human
12 Resources Administration, HRA, and the Department of
13 Homeless Services and our continuing work to move
14 forward with reforms of policies and procedures for
15 both agencies. My name is Steven Banks, and I am the
16 Commissioner of the New York City Department of
17 Social Services, and in that capacity I oversee the
18 Human Resources Administration and the Department of
19 Homeless Services. Joining me today are HRA's
20 Administrator Grace Bonilla, Department of Social
21 Services Chief Program Planning and Financial
22 Management Officer, Ellen Levine, Executive Deputy
23 Commissioner for Finance, Erin Villari, and Acting
24 Chief of Staff, Raquel Lucas. Under the new
25 integrated management structure for HRA and DHS,

2 shared agency resources within the Department of
3 Social Services include the General Counsel and the
4 Office of Legal Affairs, which includes the Agency
5 Chief Contracting Officer, Fair Hearing
6 Administration, and the Policy Procedures and
7 Training Program; the Chief Program Accountability
8 Officer and Integrity Accountability Programs which
9 include the Investigation of Revenue Enforcement
10 Administration, Audit and Quality Assurance Services,
11 and the Special Investigations Division, the Chief
12 Operating Officer and Administrative Programs which
13 include the Staff Resources Office, Management
14 Information Services, General Support Services,
15 Police Operations, and Business Process Innovation;
16 the Chief Program Planning and Financial Management
17 Officer and the Financial and Planning Programs which
18 include Finance Evaluation and Research, and Planning
19 and Performance Management Offices, the Chief
20 External Affairs Officer and External Programs which
21 include Constituent Services, Advocacy and Outreach,
22 Communications and Marketing, Legislative Affairs,
23 Public and Private Partnerships, Citywide Health
24 Insurance Access as well as IDNYC, and the EEO and
25 Disability Access and Compliance, as well as

2 Strategic Initiatives. These functions are functions
3 that formerly were in each of the agencies. Now
4 there's one streamlined approach. At the Human
5 Resources Administration the management structure
6 includes the Chief Program Officer oversees the
7 Family Independence Administration, Child Support
8 Enforcement, and the Medical Insurance and Community
9 Services Administration; the Chief Special Services
10 Officer oversees Emergency and Intervention Services
11 which include our Domestic Violence Programs and
12 services, Customized Assistance Services for clients,
13 the HIV/AIDS Services Administration, Adult
14 Protective Services, Home Care Services, Supportive
15 Affordable Housing and Services, and Crisis and
16 Disaster Management, and the Chief Homelessness
17 Prevention Officer who oversees Housing and Homeless
18 Services initiatives, Legal Assistance initiatives,
19 and the Outreach, Rehousing and Landlord Management,
20 and that's where the Office of Civil Justice is
21 located. At the Department of Homeless Services, the
22 management structure includes the senior managers and
23 programs for Capacity Planning and Development,
24 Family Services, Adult Services, Street Homelessness,
25 Healthcare Policy and Administration, Maintenance

2 Repair and Capital Construction, and the Shelter and
3 Support Program Budget Office. Today I will first
4 discuss the Executive FY 18 budget for the Human
5 Resources Administration which includes the budget
6 for the Department of Social Services, and then I
7 will discuss the Executive 18 budget for the
8 Department of Homeless Services. First, HRA. Every
9 day across the City HRA is focused on providing
10 supports to individuals who are most impacted by
11 income inequality. HRA's programs and services
12 support individuals who are looking for work or who
13 are working, but income is not enough to afford basic
14 expenses for themselves or their families by
15 providing cash assistance, food stamps, employment
16 education programs, and medical insurance. HRA also
17 provide these supports for New Yorkers who are unable
18 to work, most of whom are children, seniors,
19 individuals with disability, and others who are
20 unable to work as determined under Federal and State
21 Law. HRA also administers a range of housing programs
22 to support low income New Yorkers including
23 supportive housing which combines affordable housing
24 with supportive services. HRA also provides housing
25 services for New Yorkers who are low-income and have

2 been diagnosed with HIV so that they do not have to
3 make the difficult decision of choosing between
4 housing and healthcare, and through the agency's
5 Homelessness Prevention Administration, we connect
6 New Yorkers to a wide range of comprehensive
7 prevention programs and supports including civil
8 legal services, rental assistance and emergency
9 grants to avert entry into shelter, and assist
10 clients as they transition from shelter to permanent
11 housing. Over the past three years, the
12 Administration has implemented and expanded
13 fundamental and key initiatives in order to address
14 income inequality and prevent and alleviate
15 homelessness. First, the Administration rebuilt
16 rental assistance and rehousing programs that had
17 been eliminated with the result that between 2011 and
18 2014 homelessness increased 38 percent and the DHS
19 shelter census increased by more than 14,000 men,
20 women and children. Reinstating rental assistance
21 and rehousing programs enable 51,500 children and
22 adults to move out of shelter or avoid entry into
23 shelter in the first place from the summer of 2014
24 through December 31st, 2016, and another 6,205 so far
25 this year as of April 1, thereby helping 57,705

2 individuals move out of shelter or avert entry into
3 shelter. Further, we have committed to the largest
4 municipal program to build and expand supportive
5 housing by funding 15,000 new units of supportive
6 housing over the next 15 years with the first 550
7 units coming online this year. This critical
8 investment will address the barriers that prevent
9 stable housing for vulnerable New Yorkers such as
10 those with mental illness, substance use disorders or
11 other chronic conditions as well as New Yorkers with
12 HIV/AIDS and young adults aging out of foster care.
13 This coincides with a historic investment in civil
14 legal services. We have seen a 24 percent decline in
15 evictions over the past three years, resulting in
16 more than 40,000 New Yorkers being able to stay in
17 their homes in 2015 and 2016, and the increased
18 payment of rent arrears means that more than 161,000
19 households were able to keep a roof over their heads.
20 HRA's budget reflects the Administration's priorities
21 to support low-income New Yorkers while providing
22 comprehensive preventive services to reduce shelter
23 entries. Overview of the Executive 2018 Plan: The
24 HRA budget as of the Executive 2018 Plan is 9.7
25 billion, 7.3 billion City funds, in Fiscal 2017 and

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2 9.9 billion, 7.5 billion City funds, in Fiscal 18.

3 For FY18, the DSS/HRA headcount is funded at 14,689

4 of which 11,269 are City positions. The 2018

5 Executive Budget increases by 169 million in total

6 funds, 230 million City funds, compared to 2017

7 budget. The primary reason for the increase is as

8 follows: 84 million is related to the final transfer

9 of administrative and program funding from DHS to DSS

10 and HRA in 2018 as part of the reform and

11 consolidation of homeless Services. This includes a

12 total of nearly 50 million for prevention and

13 aftercare services which will be administered by HRA

14 beginning in 2018 as well as the full implementation

15 of the DSS shared services model that started phasing

16 in beginning in the current fiscal year; 15 million

17 dollars for Universal Access to Counsel in Housing

18 Court and 18.2 million for legal defense for

19 immigrants facing deportation beginning in FY18; and

20 one-time City fund savings of 112 million in FY17 for

21 prior year revenues. The two pie charts in the Power

22 Point we have provided to you show in more detail how

23 the HRA budget is allocated in 2017 and 2018 as of

24 the Executive Budget. Let me now give you HRA budget

25 highlights, new funding. First, legal services. As

3 discussed in detail in the Preliminary Budget hearing
4 before the Courts and Legal Services Committee on
5 March 7th of this year, HRA's Office of Civil Justice
6 oversees the provision of civil legal services for
7 New Yorkers in need including tenants facing
8 evictions, immigrant New Yorkers in need of
9 deportation defense, access to benefits, support for
10 survivors of domestic violence, assistance for
11 veterans and other legal assistance for tenants in
12 need. In Fiscal Year 2017, for the first time, New
13 York City's overall investment in civil legal seniors
14 for low income city residents exceeds 100 million.
15 In the current fiscal year, Mayoral programs exceed
16 83 million, and the City Council awards are nearly 28
17 million. In Fiscal 18, this investment will increase
18 to fund two historic initiatives. In February of
19 this year, the Mayor and the Speaker announced the
20 nation's first Universal Access to Anti-Eviction
21 Counsel in Housing Court program. This program will
22 be phased in over five years and builds on existing
23 programs serving tenants in Housing Court. In the
24 first year of the phase-in, we plan to target zip
25 codes identified through input from providers,
advocates and Council Members who will be taking into

account relevant housing pressures and dynamics including the pervasiveness of rent regulated housing in a particular zip code, the volume of court filings and evictions and shelter entries from the community. This approach in the first year provides for the best and only way for the Housing Court facilitate such an expansion while ensuring accountability that cases in a selected category are provided with access to services. We are committed to annual growth in each of the five boroughs as well as a robust program evaluation as we fully implement this critical program. We will continue to work with the Council as we move forward with implementation and will provide regular updates on our progress. In Executive 18 plan includes baseline funding as follows: 77.1 million for legal services programs for tenants facing eviction, harassment and displacement compared to the adopted 17 budget funded at 62 million, not including City Council funding. The Executive 18 plan includes 40.7 million for eviction defense, legal services for low-income tenants in Housing Court, and 33.9 million for anti-harassment/displacement legal services as well as 2.5 million for administrative and staff support, which

2 includes additional headcount for the expansion of
3 universal access to Council in Housing Court. The
4 increase in the Executive 18 Plan is due to funding
5 the first phase of the Universal Access to Counsel
6 Program funded at 15.1 million in total funds, 10.8
7 million in City funds. This investment increases to
8 30.8 million and 22.7 million in City funds in FY 19
9 and 53.9 million in total funds and 37.6 million in
10 city funds in FY20. This amount grows to 93 million
11 in total funds by FY22 when the Access to Counsel in
12 Housing Court program is fully implemented. At full
13 implementation the total annual investment in anti-
14 eviction and anti-harassment legal services will be
15 155 million and approximately 400,000 New Yorkers
16 will benefit annually for this program. The
17 Executive 18 Plan adds Fiscal Year 18 baseline
18 funding at HRA of 16.4 million in total city funds
19 for immigration legal assistance, and an additional
20 one million for outreach through the ActionNYC
21 program operated in partnership with MOIA and CUNY.
22 This increase in baseline funding for immigration
23 legal services is focused on expanding access to
24 representation for complex immigration cases and
25 deportation defense. This funding includes the

2 Immigrant Opportunities Initiative and dedicated
3 funding for complex cases. This representation of
4 immigrant New Yorkers in complex legal cases can
5 include representation in asylum proceedings; seeking
6 permanent status for immigrant children through the
7 family courts; and visa applications on behalf of
8 survivors of domestic violence in addition to the
9 Deportation Defense Services. The Administration's
10 Adopted FY17 budget included baseline funding at 14
11 million for immigration legal assistance as well as
12 outreach through the ActionNYC program operated in
13 partnership with MOIA and CUNY, and Community
14 Services Block Grant funding funds citywide and
15 community legal services organizations to provide a
16 range of services such as legal assistance to help
17 immigrant adults and youth attain citizenship and
18 lawful immigration status, legal and social services
19 for immigrant survivors of domestic violence and
20 human trafficking, and services designated to provide
21 information, education, advocacy and legal services
22 to protect low-wage immigrants from exploitation and
23 violations of their employment rights. These
24 investments were complemented by the Council's
25 discretionary adds in FY17, including 2.6 million for

2 Immigrants Opportunities Initiative as well as 6.2
3 million for the New York Immigrant Family Unity
4 Project for detained immigrants in deportation
5 proceedings and 1.5 million for I-Care for
6 unaccompanied children and recently arrived families
7 in deportation proceedings. It is our estimate that
8 the funding in the baseline of more than 30.7 million
9 for FY 18 will provide more than 15,000 individuals
10 with free, safe, immigration legal representation.
11 Homelessness Prevention Enhancements: Within HRA's
12 Homelessness Prevention Administration Unit, the
13 Executive Budget adds resources to support rehousing
14 and placement out of shelter of 17 positions,
15 complemented by 13 additional positions at DHS. This
16 investment provides additional support to move
17 individuals and families from shelter to permanent
18 housing. Staff teams work directly with families in
19 shelter to move them into housing placements with
20 rental assistance or subsidized housing. These teams
21 assist clients with locating apartments, completing
22 rental assistance applications and interviews, and
23 moving into apartments. Since Fiscal 2015, through
24 comprehensive rental assistance programs and
25 subsidized housing, more than 57,705 individuals have

2 avoided entry into or moved out shelter. The
3 increase in HRA's budget is 1.9 million in total
4 funds and City funds in FY18 and in the out-years for
5 17 positions. Additionally, the Executive 18 Plan
6 funds 13 positions within DHS with 1.1 million of
7 total funds and City funds in FY18. As part of the
8 reform of Homelessness Prevention Services,
9 homelessness prevention services were consolidated in
10 HRA. A total of nearly 59 million annually starting
11 in 2018 will support a new HomeBase program that will
12 provide coordinated preventive, aftercare and
13 community support services including benefits
14 advocacy, budgeting, employment, short-term financial
15 assistance, and help with housing relocation. The
16 new program includes the baseline funding for
17 prevention programs previously in DHS totaling 39.2
18 million as well as 18.2 million in HRA that was added
19 to the budget with the advent of the new rental
20 assistance programs and as part of the 90-day review.
21 Healing NYC: This initiative aligns with the
22 Administration's commitment to addressing the serious
23 opioid epidemic in New York City. This work at HRA
24 and DHS will help address the opioid epidemic through
25 overdose prevention efforts, including expanding

2 treatment and increasing public awareness. Funding
3 is provided for three additional staff, one in the
4 HRA budget and two in DHS. At HRA, this position
5 will serve as an overdose prevention coordinator to
6 manage agency prevention efforts across programs such
7 as HASA and DV, substance use assessment and case
8 management programs as well as programs for clients
9 in transitional housing as a result of relocation
10 from overcrowded conditions in Three-Quarter Houses.
11 The two staff at DHS will have similar functions,
12 ensuring Naloxone training and distribution across
13 the shelter system as well as drug use prevention and
14 harm reduction services. Service Provider Wage
15 Adjustment: New York City has a vibrant and
16 extensive nonprofit sector and the institutions which
17 comprise it work every day to serve New Yorkers and
18 partner regularly with HRA, the Department of
19 Homeless Services as well other City human services
20 agencies. As a result, in the fall of 2016, the
21 Mayor announced the creation of the Nonprofit
22 Resiliency Committee charged with identifying,
23 designating and launching solutions to support the
24 nonprofit sector in administrative processes, service
25 and program design, and organizational

2 infrastructure. The Executive Budget includes an
3 allocation to provide wage increase for HRA not-for-
4 profit contract providers. The allocation is funded
5 at 3.6 million of total funds and 2.7 million City
6 funds in 18, 7.2 million total funds and 5.4 million
7 in City funds in FY19, 10.9 million in total funds,
8 and 8.2 million City funds in FY20. This initiative
9 funds both the COLA as well as a wage floor. HRA
10 efficiencies; Fair Hearing Chargebacks: We have
11 testified before the Council previously about our
12 reform efforts aimed at ensuring access to benefits
13 for our clients as well as addressing staff workload
14 and operational inefficiencies resulting in savings
15 for the City. As a result of implementing changes
16 such as plain language notices and expanding the use
17 of technology, we are making it easier for our
18 clients to obtain and keep benefits without having to
19 expend the time and resources when clients challenge
20 benefit problems at State Fair Hearings. The HRA
21 Fair Hearing program continues to make significant
22 progress in addressing the issues that cause people
23 to ask for fair hearings. A Centralized Packet
24 Review Unit was created to fully assess the client's
25 request for hearing. This unit was fully trained to

resolve cases by doing a thorough review of agency actions. Also, there's a new program that began December 2016 for outreach for clients that requested hearings. The Fair Hearing Administration in collaboration with other HRA areas has implemented various computer solutions to identify cases that should not close, thereby avoiding unnecessary hearing requests. The agency has utilized robo calls and outreach to clients in order to remind them of deadlines and actions that need to be taken so they can continue to receive their benefits. The Fair Hearing Unit also created dedicated email boxes for advocates to contact the agency to resolve cases. As a result, we re-estimated the State fair hearing costs that are charged back to New York City by the State because Fair Hearing requests have declined by 40 percent since the beginning of this Administration. The Executive 18 budget includes a reduction of three million in total funds and three million City funds in FY17 and the out-years, a result of this 40 percent reduction. OIT Consultant Insourcing: Cost avoidance savings are included in the FY18 budget as a result of the conversion of former DHS IT consultants to City-funded headcount in

FY18 and the out-years. The addition of 49 headcount in FY18 resulted in a reduction of 1.5 million in total City funds in FY18; the addition of 99 headcount in FY19 and the out-years resulted in a reduction of three million in total City funds in FY19 and the out-years. The HRA Capital Plan for 2018 to 2027 totals 285.3 million of which 168 million are City funds. This includes 206.2 million, of which 122.1 million are City funds, in the 2018-2021 Four-Year Plan. The 10-Year Capital Plan includes 156.2 million for technology, including key investments related to Client Services Re-engineering, which I'll be discussing. In the Executive Capital Plan, funds were added for the HRA One Number, continued ACCESS HRA development, and a new landlord portal. ACCESS HRA: The ACCESS HRA-- ACCESS NYC portal has been relaunched as ACCESS HRA. In addition to allowing food stamp clients to check the status of their case, review upcoming deadlines and appointments and see what documents have been requested and received by the Agency, clients are able to submit telephone number, language preference and mailing and email address changes through the portal. As of February of this year, clients can opt

2 to receive local notices electronically ensuring
3 receipt of these notices even if they do not have
4 immediate access to their mail. ACCESS HRA allows
5 clients to view E-notices that remain viewable for
6 365 days. Go Paperless: Clients are able to opt-in
7 to reduce the number of paper notices sent from HRA.
8 Clients can request an electronic budget letter from
9 the Case Detail page which will appear as an e-notice
10 on the next business day. Clients can recertify a
11 Cash Assistance case, reprint a barcoded,
12 prepopulated Medicaid renewal form. Document Reuse:
13 Select documents on file at HRA for identity, age,
14 and other eligibility documents to reuse them when
15 submitting an online application; receive a text
16 message and email alerts about their case. For
17 example, a client can now receive a text when their
18 SNAP recertification period begins. After submitting
19 a recertification form, a client can track the date
20 it was received by HRA on the Case Details page.
21 And after completing a SNAP interview, the client can
22 see when the status of the interview updates to
23 "KEPT" under My Appointments. HRA also launched
24 ACCESS HRA Self-Service Mobile app that provides
25 access to case information including appointments and

documents requested and continues to allow clients to upload images of SNAP and Cash Assistance eligibility documents. HRA was awarded a 1.5 million US Department of Agriculture grant for this initiative. Since the application's launch, clients have uploaded over a million images, representing more than 180,000 SNAP and Cash Assistance cases. As clients apply for benefits online they create their online account. We currently have 890,000 such accounts. At January's Hunger Hearing we reported there were 126,363 linked HRA online accounts for SNAP and Cash Assistance households. As of last week, there are now 211,005 linked accounts. These linked accounts allows clients to manage their cases online, track their benefits balance, request case letters and many other tools. As we continue to build out the functionality of ACCESS HRA, more clients can link their accounts in order to manage their accounts, including recertifying for benefits. ACCESS NYC is accessible in English and the six Local Law 73 languages: Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. The HRA One Number: The HRA One Number, an upgrade of HRA's Interactive Voice Response System will ensure adequate support for all programs and

2 avoid additional maintenance cost this upgrade will
3 support the integration of HRA and DHS administrative
4 functions under DSS, compliance with lawsuit
5 settlements related to disability access and multi-
6 agency public awareness campaigns that will be
7 launched in 2017 around public benefits like SNAP.
8 We are also introducing a Landlord Management System
9 to reduce payment errors and create staff
10 efficiencies through electronic funds transfer
11 payments to landlords. Now with the integration of
12 DHS and HRA under the Department of Social Services,
13 this new system will provide additional opportunities
14 to streamline programs and create more efficient ways
15 of doing business. With the development of a
16 Landlord Management System, we are creating a system
17 that will transform the way we do business for the
18 over 158,000 payments we make each month to
19 landlords. In addition to providing electronic funds
20 transfer payments to landlords, the Landlord
21 Management System will provide a multifunctional,
22 public facing portal for clients as well as
23 landlords. Clients will be able to access case
24 information through ACCESS HRA allowing them to
25 provide information necessary to keep their cases

3 current as well as reduce the need to go form an HRA
4 center in person in order to provide documentation or
5 update their case information. Clients will also
6 have the ability to renew rental subsidies and view
7 payments made on the client's behalf to landlords.
8 As a result, there will be better coordination across
9 program areas and a more straightforward process to
10 move out of shelter and into permanent housing. For
11 landlords, they too will be able use the public
12 facing portal to create a user profile and update
13 account information such as address and bank
14 information and thereby register for electronic funds
15 transfer of rental payments. Landlords will be able
16 to designate users such as a managing agent on their
17 behalf. In addition, landlords will be able to
18 notify DSS when clients and tenants have moved. For
19 HRA staff, the need for data entry into multiple
20 systems will be reduced, resulting in reductions of
21 calls and emails to get real time updates on client
22 cases. Documents will be accessible to staff within
23 the new source system without cutting down on the
24 need-- with thereby cutting down on the need to scan
25 and email them, and this will result in a reduced
call volume from landlords and managing agents and

better coordination of information across programs.

HRA Employment Plan: On April 3rd, HRA launched a comprehensive new approach to help clients connect to and build a career that will lead to success and financial security. HRA's Career Services, formerly known as Employment Services, offers programs that work closely with Cash Assistance clients to help them find the right opportunities to match their skills, needs and career services-- career goals. The new approach leaves behind the one-size-fits-all approach of the past to offer services that take into consideration the individual needs of clients while providing specialized services for youth and other groups with specific needs. These new programs expand on the reforms HRA has already made, aimed at reducing unnecessary sanctions and case closings that have an adverse impact on staff workload and have severe consequences for clients. The new approach offers more meaningful opportunities for clients. For example, HRA ended the one-size-fits-all Work Experience or WEP program in December 2016, replacing it with more choices like internships, community service and work-study opportunities. Depending on their situation, clients will now be matched with new

3 programs provided by Career Services providers.

4 CareerCompass works with adult clients to assess
5 their individual skills and experience and helps them
6 in finding employment, training and education
7 programs as well as internship and community service
8 opportunities that best suit their goals.

9 YouthPathways works with clients age 18 to 24 to
10 assess their skills and experience and provides
11 career, education, and training services; and helps
12 clients find programs, including internships and
13 community service, tailored to the needs of the
14 younger population. CareerAdvance offers career,
15 education, and training services in specific
16 industries and neighborhoods in New York City, and to
17 group such as those with limited English proficiency
18 or older clients. Service providers work with
19 clients to help them set up career goals, come up
20 with a plan to achieve them, and connect clients to
21 protective services to build their skills and improve
22 their resumes. HIV Services; HASA for All: On August
23 29th, 2016 we expanded medical eligibility for the
24 HASA programs--

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

[interposing] Commissioner?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm going
4 to ask you to take a breath, because you got seven--
5 like 100 more pages to go. I want you to-- you're
6 really, really fast, and we're trying to follow you,
7 and I know that--

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: you're
10 doing it because you want to get us out of here on
11 time, but you can breathe every now and then.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's such a
13 welcome comment from a Committee Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: There you
15 go. I know. The rest of the hearing will not be this
16 nice, but you can breathe for now.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Alright,
19 thank you, Commissioner.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As you can see,
21 we've done a lot.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I know.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We want to make sure
24 you can see all the things that we have been doing.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: We
3 appreciate it, but you're going very, very fast, and
4 we're trying to kind of follow with you.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I wanted to keep my
6 commitment to some of the Council Members.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I heard.
8 I know, the Minority Leader will be okay.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
11 you.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I made a commitment
13 to Council Member Perkins as well. I want to make
14 sure I keep to that. We have a longstanding
15 relationship, but it's on the line. HASA for All:
16 On August 29th, 2016 we expanded medical eligibility
17 for the HASA programs so as to permit all
18 financially-eligible New York City residents with HIV
19 to seek and obtain HASA services. Although the
20 financial requirements remain unchanged, an applicant
21 need no longer have AIDS or be symptomatic in order
22 to be eligible for HASA services. The HASA program
23 has successfully implemented this change. From August
24 29, 2016 to March 31st, 2017, HASA has accepted 3,487
25 new clients compared with 2,436 new clients during

2 the same period in 2015 and 2016. This represents a
3 43 percent increase. Of the 3,487 accepted clients
4 between August 29th 2016 and March 31st, 2017, 1,907
5 were expansion clients. Expansion clients were 55
6 percent of the new cases. To accommodate the
7 increasing caseload, HASA was provided with
8 additional funding to hire 28 new case manager
9 through FY18. This was a major policy change that
10 this Administration supported together with the
11 Council and advocates. Under previous state policy a
12 client needed to not only be low-income but also have
13 an AIDS diagnosis or a clinically symptomatic HIV
14 diagnosis in order to be eligible for HASA benefits
15 such as an enhanced shelter allowance. This outdated
16 policy meant that low-income New Yorkers with HIV
17 were left to make choices between necessities such as
18 housing and food or their medication. The lack of
19 access to healthcare coupled with unstable housing,
20 homelessness and poverty are all drivers of the AIDS
21 epidemic, yet for too long necessary assistance was
22 provided only to those New Yorker whose health
23 deteriorated rather than taking a prevention approach
24 to invest in enhanced rental assistance, increased
25 food and transportation allowances, and seamless

2 support services. Now, HASA programs and services are
3 available to all low-income New Yorkers with HIV so
4 they can maintain viral suppression and meet their
5 basic needs. As of March 31, 2017, HASA had a
6 caseload of 33,320 clients. Including family
7 members, we are serving a total of 43,636 individuals
8 through the HASA program. Supportive Housing NYC
9 15/15: The Mayor's NYC 15/15 plan to create 15,000
10 units of new supportive housing over the next 15
11 years includes more units than the combined number of
12 units from the three previous New York/New York
13 supporting housing agreements and is larger than any
14 supportive housing effort in the country. From
15 decades of research, we know that this comprehensive
16 plan will benefit New Yorkers in need, including
17 homeless veterans, domestic violence survivors, and
18 street homeless individuals. The first 550 scatter-
19 site units will be coming online this year and will
20 serve single adults and adult families with SMI/SUD.
21 The RFP for 7,500 units of congregate supportive
22 housing has been issued and we are accepting
23 proposals. These units will serve single adults and
24 adult families with SMI/SUD, adults with children in
25 which the head of the household has SMI/SUD, young

2 adult families with single adults ages 18 to 24. The
3 units will require new construction and development
4 and will come online in 18 to 24 months. The RFP for
5 the remaining 6,905 scatter-site units will be
6 released this month and will serve adult and adult
7 families with SMI/SUD and adults with children in
8 which the head of the household has SMI/SUD, and
9 single young adults. We expect to release an RFP this
10 summer for additional 90 units of scatter-site
11 supportive housing for young adult families,
12 utilizing a new model to serve this population.
13 Supportive Housing is a multiagency initiative in
14 which HRA plays a lead role in procuring scatter-site
15 units as well as procuring services for congregate
16 supportive housing locations. HRA also determines
17 eligibility for these units across various criteria
18 established through the New York/New York agreements
19 as well as the NYC 15/15 program. HRA partners with
20 HPD which is the lead for developing congregate
21 supportive housing and the Department of Health and
22 Mental Hygiene which will manage the contracts for
23 supportive housing. The Exec 18 budget includes 26.4
24 million in total funds and City funds in FY18, 50.2
25 million in total funds and City funds in FY19, and

2 74.4 million in total funds and City funds in FY20
3 that will be transferred to HRA to DOHMH for
4 supportive housing contracts. According to a 2014
5 study of supportive housing by the Urban Institute,
6 85 percent of all clients remained housed in the
7 program one year after placement, and two years after
8 placement 74 percent remained housed. This
9 supportive environment can also reconnect individuals
10 with family members and integrate individuals into a
11 neighborhood and the community and the workforce,
12 thereby creating a web of social supports that are
13 difficult to maintain when housing is unstable or
14 nonexistent. Supportive Housing has proven track
15 record of reducing cost. A DOHMH study showed that
16 New York/New York III clients who were placed into
17 supportive housing used public benefits, Medicaid,
18 psychiatric institutions, jails, and shelters less
19 than clients who are not placed, resulting in net
20 cost savings. Over the course of FY17, HRA has
21 continued to implement core reforms to better serve
22 clients. The elimination of WEP and the new
23 Employment Plan are key examples of this
24 Administration's commitment to serving our clients
25 and supporting them on path to self-sufficiency.

2 Technology and business improvements continue to be
3 made so that clients are able to apply and recertify
4 for the benefits for which they are eligible without
5 fear of disruption of these critical supports. This
6 Administration has placed an increased emphasis on
7 the role of prevention services and continues to
8 actively explain the tools and resources available to
9 those in need. Each day the staff members at HRA
10 carry out this work. This prevention-first strategy
11 is critical to reducing the numbers of families and
12 individuals living in shelter, and is a cost-
13 effective and common sense solution to address
14 homelessness. However, each day families and
15 individuals in New York City turn to the City when
16 they are unable to keep a roof over their head and we
17 must meet our moral and legal obligation to provide
18 shelter for those who are in need. Let me turn now
19 to Department Homeless Services. The homelessness
20 problem we face is the result of decades of changes
21 in our economy and past choices made in New York
22 City, Albany and Washington. From 1994 to 2014, the
23 DHS shelter census skyrocketed 115 percent, rising
24 from 23,868 men, women and children in January 1994,
25 to 31,009 in January 2002, before reaching 51,470 in

January 2014. At the same time, the City lost tens of thousands of affordable and rent-stabilized units. This steady decline in housing affordability, coupled with the decline in real wages has driven many working families and individuals into homelessness. In April 2011, this affordability crisis was made worse when the City and State ended the Advantage rental assistance program, which had offered subsidies to people in shelter if they took part in job training. In less than three years after the end of the program, the shelter population increased 39 percent, some 14,000 people. Had this administration not stopped this trajectory, the DHS shelter census would have likely reached nearly 70,000 in December 2017 rather than the 58,646 it was at on Friday. As the City's new plan attests, this Administration has stemmed the tide of homeless shelter census growth in New York City and we are now focused on achieving a sustained reduction in the shelter census. Nevertheless, while the structural forces driving homelessness in New York City, poverty and a lack of affordable housing are similar to other urban areas in the U.S., the scale of the problem in New York City now faces is unique in its intensity and

2 scope. A few statistics emphasized the severity of
3 the problem. Between 2000 and 2014, the median New
4 York City rent increase by 19 percent in real
5 dollars, and the household income decreased. Let me
6 repeat that. The household income decreased by 6.3
7 percent in real dollars. Meanwhile, between 1994 and
8 2012, the City suffered a net loss of about 150,000
9 rent stabilized units. Combined, these and other
10 trends meant that by 2015 the City had only half the
11 housing it needs for about three million low-income
12 New Yorkers. As a result, these New Yorkers end up
13 sacrificing a great deal to stay in their homes and
14 maintain their connections to their communities.
15 Some 360,000 New York City households pay more than
16 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities.
17 Another 140,000 households pay more 30 percent. This
18 means the total of a half of million New Yorkers are
19 paying an unaffordable amount of their income for
20 housing. Many people who face these rent burdens
21 cycle in and out of poverty, living just oen personal
22 crisis away from homelessness. In fact, an ongoing
23 longitudinal study suggests that nearly half of all
24 New Yorkers lived in poverty at some point during
25 2012 and 2014, the three-year period studied. As a

2 result of these economic factors, 70 percent of the
3 shelter system census now consists of families, and
4 34 percent of the families with children have an
5 adult who is working. At the same time, domestic
6 violence is a major driver of homelessness with some
7 30 percent of the families with children in the DHS
8 shelter system having a history of domestic violence.
9 In April of last year, the Mayor announced 46 reforms
10 following a comprehensive 90-day review of homeless
11 programs and services in New York City. During this
12 review period we took specific and immediate action
13 to address homelessness problem. During this time we
14 committed to the largest municipal supportive housing
15 expansion in the nation, provided additional Tier II
16 and emergency beds for survivors of domestic
17 violence, expanded the number of dedicated youth beds
18 for runaway and homeless youth, and implemented a
19 plan to double the number of drop-in centers which
20 are a critical tool to bring individuals off the
21 street that the prior Administration had cut. Last
22 month, I testified in detail about each of these 46
23 reforms, but our work did not end there. During our
24 work addressing management and immediate operational
25 issues during and after the 90-day review, this

3 February the Mayor release "Turning the Tide," a
4 comprehensive borough-based plan to shrink the
5 footprint of the City's homeless shelter system by 45
6 percent and reduce the shelter census over the next
7 five years. Our vision for "Turning the Tide" relies
8 on three approaches. First, doing more to keep
9 people in their homes by stopping evictions, helping
10 families and individuals remain with family members
11 in the community and making housing more affordable.
12 Second, continuing to enhance our HOME-STAT program
13 to bring people in from the streets. Third, a
14 reimagined approach to providing shelter that ends
15 use of the 17-year cluster apartment program by the
16 end of 2021 and the decades-old use of commercial
17 hotel facilities by the end of 2023; cuts the total
18 number of shelter facilities by almost 45 percent by
19 getting out 360 cluster apartment and commercial
20 hotel locations and replacing them with a smaller
21 number of 90 new high-quality shelters in all five
22 boroughs; and provides homeless families and
23 individuals with an opportunity to be in shelter as
24 close as possible to their own communities and the
25 anchors of life like schools, jobs, healthcare,
houses of worship and family to help them get back on

2 their feet and out of shelter more quickly. Keeping
3 people in their homes and moving them off the
4 streets: Let me highlight some of the steps that
5 have been taken. Affordable housing: Committed to
6 build or preserve 200,000 affordable apartments. In
7 just three years the City has already financed a
8 record 62,506 affordable apartments. As an update,
9 the City's now committed 1.9 billion to expand our
10 housing programs to include 10,000 apartments focused
11 on seniors, veterans, and other low-income families.
12 Added rental assistance for seniors: We continue to
13 work with our colleagues in Albany to pass the
14 Mansion Tax that will create a new Elder Rental
15 Assistance program to help more than 25,000 seniors
16 stay in their homes. Rental assistance/rehousing
17 initiatives: Since 2014, as I testified earlier,
18 57,705 people have secured permanent housing through
19 our rental assistance and rehousing initiatives.
20 Emergency rental assistance: We provided emergency
21 rental assistance to 161,000 households, helping rent
22 burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in
23 their homes. Supportive Housing: As we mentioned,
24 15,000 new units of new supportive housing will be
25 provided over the next 15 years, representing the

largest municipal commitment to supportive housing.

As the Administration has increased funding for legal services more than 40,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes and evictions are down 24 percent. And as an update as I mentioned earlier in the testimony, the FY18 Executive Budget the City included 50.1 million to provide the first year of universal access to counsel in Housing Court proceedings implementation as part of the five-year phase in, and street homelessness during the first year of HOME-STAT, we moved 748 individuals off the street and into transitional programs or permanent housing. We've made longstanding operational reforms. At the Mayor's direction we took an in-depth look at the homelessness services resulting in 46 reforms aimed at preventing homelessness, addressing street homelessness, improving conditions and safety in shelters, and helping New Yorkers transition from shelter to permanent housing as part of the 90-day review of homeless services. For shelter conditions, inspections are up 50 percent while violation are down 83 percent. In 2016, the City conducted more than 13,000 inspections, a 50 percent increase from 2015, and with not-for-profit

2 providers we fixed more than 14,000 code violations.

3 We've gotten out of 831 cluster apartments,

4 prioritizing those with the most serious problems and

5 working to end the use of clusters altogether. For

6 security we've doubled the investments, and the NYPD

7 is now taking the lead. In 2016, the NYPD conducted a

8 comprehensive review of security at homeless

9 shelters, and the Administration doubled the 2013

10 investment in DHS security with a total annual

11 security spending of 217 million for FY17. As of

12 this year, NYPD is now overseeing DHS shelter

13 security, including standardizing and

14 professionalizing security surveillance and staff

15 training. The Administration's placed 3,153 homeless

16 veterans into permanent housing, and as you know, in

17 December 2015 HUD declared chronic veteran

18 homelessness a thing of the past. A core part of the

19 reimagining of the shelter strategy is closing all

20 cluster apartments and commercial hotels. Over the

21 course of the plan we'll get out of all 360 cluster

22 apartment sites and commercial hotels and replace

23 them with a smaller number of 90 new borough-based

24 shelters. As a result of our work so far, there are

25 now less than 250 buildings with cluster apartments

in them at approximately 10,000 people in less than
2,900 units from a program that at its high point had
more than 3,600 units. And around 7,500 individuals
continue to occupy hotel rooms. We'll be creating
fewer new borough-based replacement shelters. The
City will open approximately 18 to 20 shelters
annually over the next five years with a range of
services on site. This borough-based approach will
allow families and individuals to be placed in
proximity to schools, jobs, healthcare, houses of
worship, and family and neighbors. As we shrink the
footprint of shelters citywide by 45 percent, we'll
reform how we notify communities about our plans to
open shelters when they are needed to meet multiple
court-ordered right to shelter mandates, and we
welcome the support of this body in bringing our
providers suitable locations to open these needed
facilities. In the past two months, I've testified
in several hearings about the Administration's plan
to address homelessness in the "Turning Tide" plan
released in February and most recently provided in-
depth update on the 90-day review reforms. Now, let
me now discuss the DHS Budget as of the FY18
Executive Plan. Overview of the Plan: The DHS

2 budget as of the FY18 Plan is 1.6 billion, 883
3 million City funds, in FY18. The DHS headcount is
4 funded at 2,483 positions in FY18. The FY18
5 Executive Budget reflects the new initiative that
6 were funded in the Financial Plan as well as full
7 implementation of the DSS consolidation and transfer
8 of prevention rehousing services to HRA. As I noted
9 in the HRA section, this includes Prevention and
10 Aftercare, as well as the full implementation of the
11 DSS shared services model that started phasing in
12 beginning of the current fiscal year. The FY18
13 Executive Plan added 63 million, 54 million City
14 funds, and 79 positions in 17 and 177 million, 110
15 million City funds, and 80 positions in 18. The two
16 pie charts in the PowerPoint we've provided to show
17 in more detail how the DHS budget is allocated in 17
18 and 18 as of the Executive Budget submission. Let me
19 know discuss homeless shelter provider rate reform
20 and investment in the not-for-profit sector. The
21 FY18 Executive Budget adds 36 million, 18 million in
22 City funds, in FY18 growing to 71 million, 34 million
23 in City funds in FY20, to fund rate reform for
24 shelter providers, including funding added in the
25 prior plans, funding for rate reform added since the

2 Executive 17 plan totals 146 million, 80 million in
3 City funds, at full implementation. Last April, in
4 the 90-day review of reforms, DHS announced that it
5 would rationalize payment rates for shelter providers
6 to ensure that all contracted shelter programs can
7 provide consistent and high-quality levels of service
8 and are able to maintain their facilities in
9 accordance with City and State standards for
10 operations, including caseload ratios; resources for
11 special needs and the facilitation of housing
12 placement; real-time maintenance and repairs; and
13 funding for health and safety needs, including
14 security and support staff. As also discussed within
15 the context of the HRA budget, our agency
16 partnerships with not-for-profits are critical to
17 meeting the needs of New York in shelter. And at DHS
18 this rate reform investment is one that supports the
19 not-for-profit sector itself. Funding for rate
20 reform was developed through a model budget process
21 that included analysis of current rates to determine
22 where there were providers that were below standards.
23 Meetings were held with providers to understand the
24 process from the provider perspective and to hear
25 concerns that were most critical for them; and DHS

2 and DSS worked with OMB to develop operating
3 principals which we intend to use as a model for
4 developing a schedule to adjust provider budgets.
5 Our goal is to begin by bringing those providers with
6 programs in the lower percentiles in the areas that
7 require adjustment up to the model. This will entail
8 a contract amendment process and we are cognizant
9 this should be managed in coordination with other
10 changes such as the most recent not-for-profit COLA.
11 The model budget or rate reform does not in
12 isolation. The model really includes more than just
13 146 million. The rate reform includes a series of
14 new initiatives that must be viewed holistically and
15 that together form the model budget. This includes
16 Thrive, 34 million; the FY16 and FY17 COLAs, total of
17 11 million; and the FY18 provider wage adjustment,
18 55.7 million in FY18 growing to 10.7 million in FY19
19 for DHS, although this is inclusive of non-shelter
20 providers as well such as the street programs. The
21 FY17 plan added adult shelter enhancements of nine
22 million for not-for-profit providers; 17 million was
23 added for security at mental health shelters in the
24 January 17 plan and Executive 17 Plans; and five
25 million was provided annually for one-time shelter

2 maintenance or repair costs that are not capially
3 eligible. Taken together, these investments for not-
4 for-profit shelter providers total over 200 million
5 when fully annualized. In addition to this more 200
6 million investment, which goes directly to provider
7 budgets or supplements them in the case of DHS-
8 provided security staff, the Administration has
9 doubled the investment in shelter security since
10 2013, with a total annual security spending of 217
11 million. Some of these increases are in directly
12 operated shelters and intake sites, but the funding
13 is also to provide additional security at many of our
14 provider operated programs. Finally, we have an
15 Executive Budget 10-Year Capital program that devotes
16 nearly 600 million to the rehabilitation of City-
17 owned shelter facilities, the majority of which are
18 operated by our not-for-profit partners. Last year,
19 when DSS began to reform the contract process, there
20 were outstanding contract issues dating back to FY14
21 and FY15. All FY14 and FY15 issues have now been
22 resolved. We are currently in the process of
23 completing the FY16 and 17 contract and associated
24 amendment transactions, as well as initiating all FY
25 contract transactions. Of those contract and

2 amendment transactions that I discussed at the
3 Preliminary Budget hearing at the end of March, 99
4 percent of the FY16 contracts and 96 percent of FY17
5 contracts are registered, and 87 percent of the FY16
6 and FY17 amendments are registered. Since the
7 Preliminary Budget hearing, a number of completely
8 new contracts and amendments to existing contracts
9 have been initiated. These additions are part of the
10 normal course of the contracting process as new
11 projects come online and vendor budgets change over
12 the course of the Fiscal year. The Administration
13 contracts include those for new shelters, and the
14 additional amendments include funding for additional
15 social workers and family shelters as part of the
16 ThriveNYC, COLA adjustments, and other new needs
17 identified by providers and funded by DHS since
18 March. In addition to completing all outstanding
19 FY16 and 17 contract and amendment transactions, we
20 have now also been working to initiate all FY18
21 contracts. We plan to have the majority of FY18
22 contracts in place at the beginning of the Fiscal
23 Year 18 for the first time in years. Street
24 Homelessness: The City continues to address street
25 homelessness through a comprehensive program to

3 address immediate and ongoing services to New Yorkers
4 who are living on the city's streets, and our
5 investments are showing progress, between
6 implementation of our HOME-STAT program in March 2016
7 and February of this year, we have helped 748
8 individuals move off the streets, and we have 1,737
9 individuals on our by name list that are HOME-STAT
10 outreach providers used to help people come in off
11 the streets, and another 1,901 individuals who we
12 continue to try to engage to determine their needs.
13 The Executive 18 Plan adds 17 positions with 1.3
14 million total and City funds in FY17 and 1.9 million
15 total and City funds in FY18 and the out-years. This
16 funding is for additional staff to support DHS Street
17 Solutions operations, and the additional positions
18 will provide oversight and management of the expanded
19 HOME-STAT street homeless outreach, DHS Drop-in
20 locations, and Safe Haven Programs. Finally, with
21 respect to the DHS 10-Year Capital Plan for 2018-2027
22 totals 650.4 million in City and total funds, of
23 which 437.3 million funds for projects between 2018
24 and 2021. 245.3 million is provided for homeless
25 family facilities, 349.5 million for single adult
facilities, 50.3 million is allocated for computer

2 systems and equipment purchases and 50.3 million is
3 provided for City Council and Borough President
4 items. An additional 65.8 million in FY17 funds is
5 for adult and family shelter facilities. There are
6 over 130 projects current in the design and/or
7 construction phase and between 17 and 18 alone, over
8 210 million is allocated to projects remedying
9 conditions in city-owned shelters. Of the 650
10 million, 315.9 million was added in Executive Plan to
11 renovate and expand existing family and adult shelter
12 sits to help meet the goals outlined in the Homeless
13 Plan, "Turning the Tide on Homelessness." Thank you
14 for this opportunity to testify and I welcome your
15 questions, and I appreciate the Chair's suggestion
16 to--

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

18 [interposing] Slow down.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: slow down.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well,
21 thank you very much, and I know that this was a more,
22 I guess, more robust than usual because we usually
23 have two separate-- you testify before each agency on
24 two separate times on the same day. So, we're hoping
25 that by merging this will also facilitate questions

2 from members, meaning that you're going to get
3 questions that are incredibly broad and very likely
4 will have second round so that members can come back
5 and finish up their questions. I wanted to start
6 with-- I know the Administration and your agency
7 announced streamlining existing rental assistance
8 programs in the new Homeless Plan, and the details
9 remain unclear. So, given that the City FEPS program
10 has assigned more families to acquire permanent
11 housing or stay in their homes compared to the LINC
12 program, when we look at the budget, it reflects that
13 there's actually a decrease in that program. Seems
14 like if I'm reading this, that's the one that works.
15 So why would we not allocate more funding as opposed
16 to keeping some of these LINC programs that might not
17 necessarily be as-- something that you-- as a tool
18 that you can use to keep families in their homes?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, let me answer
20 that question by giving you a number of different
21 aspects of what our plans are. We expect to publish
22 information about the streamline of the programs
23 during the summer. Now that the FEPS litigation
24 between the Legal Aid Society and the State Office of
25 Temporary Assistance and Disability Assistance has

2 been concluded, we want to ensure that our programs
3 are consistent with the terms of that program so that
4 from a landlord or a client perspective there is a
5 similarity across all the programs instead of having
6 different programs operating. When we began rental
7 assistance-- and I appreciate your support for the--
8 what we actually did, which was we essentially
9 rebuilt rental assistance beginning in 2014. There
10 had been no rental assistance between 2011 and 2014,
11 and so the City essentially operated a shelter system
12 without rental assistance, and we saw what the
13 results were with a 38 percent increase in
14 homelessness, more than 14,000 more people in the
15 shelter system. So, in rebuilding the system we
16 wanted to not have some of the challenges of the past
17 be problems of the future, namely a one-size-fits-all
18 approach. So we developed a number of different
19 programs targeted to different populations. So, some
20 of the LINC programs were targeted initially to
21 domestic-- survivors of domestic violence or for
22 people who are working, families who are working,
23 adults who are working, adults with disabilities,
24 senior citizens, families who could be reunited with
25 their families in the community. So we created a

2 menu of different kinds of programs and then we
3 created also CITY FEPS and SEPS models in part of the
4 state programs. And so when we are moving forward,
5 we will be moving forward with more funding on an
6 annualized basis for the entire suite of programs,
7 but we'll have a more streamlined approach so that
8 for the clients and the landlords, the program that
9 somebody is in will be seamless as opposed to how we
10 had to start out when we began the programs, which is
11 to build one program at a time. I think we've
12 learned some of the things that had been successful
13 and some of the things that needed more work, and we
14 do think that the settlement from in the FEPS
15 litigation will provide a helpful guideline, but
16 during the summer we believe we'll be able to come
17 forward with a roadmap for how we will proceed, but I
18 want to assure that we're not intending to have a
19 reduction in funding for our overall programs. What
20 we also have found, and this has been an issue that's
21 come up in prior hearings, is clients can be eligible
22 for multiple programs, and the exit with only one
23 program. And so if a client is eligible for three
24 different programs, they ultimately may be certified
25 for three programs, but they're only going to exit

2 with one of them. If the client is going to have a
3 greater opportunity to exit with City FEPS than with
4 LINC, we want the client to exit with City FEPS than
5 with LINC. The overall program is going to be
6 operated with an overall amount of funding, and then
7 the individuals clients will have whatever
8 eligibility criteria they meet, enable them to be
9 able to use the rental assistance program that we
10 have. So you're not going to see a reduction in our
11 effort with City FEPS as a result of streamlining.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So that's
13 where we, I think, then have an issue. If we're
14 going to be saying that the overall funding would be
15 the same, how will we as the oversight body
16 understand which LINC program works and which one
17 doesn't? Because we would generally follow by
18 saying, "Well, you haven't been able to spend this
19 money down. Is it because you-- because it's not
20 working because you don't find clients that are
21 eligible?" Because I mean, we're at-- is it seven
22 LINC now, right? Six.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Six, six LINC
24 programs.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And do
3 they all work as efficiently as you would want them
4 to?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think one of
6 the challenges in operating rental assistance is that
7 they are targeted to different clients. So, for
8 example, LINC I is for working families, and LINC IV
9 is for working, single adults. City FEPS benefits
10 individuals who are on public assistance, and so
11 making sure that we have different programs for
12 different clients when we rebuilt rental assistance
13 was important. As we streamline it, we still want to
14 not have a one-size-fits-all. We want to enable
15 clients who are working versus clients who are on
16 public assistance to be able to exit the shelter
17 system with these benefits. So, the fact that one
18 program may be resulting in more exits, may-- is
19 typically reflective of more clients potentially
20 being eligible for one program than another, but we
21 don't want to eliminate programs that may help
22 people. For example, the program for LINC IV is very
23 much focused on single adults or adult families with
24 senior citizens or that have other challenges, and so
25 we don't want to eliminate that program. We want to

2 keep it operating even as we streamline and continue
3 to expand clients who might be able to exit with City
4 FEPS. We think the better measure is overall how
5 many people and how many households are exiting, and
6 are we continuing to see growth in what we're
7 spending reflective of continuing to move people out
8 rather than any one program's variations up and down.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I
10 mean, if you look at the population, we still haven't
11 necessarily-- and I'm sure that even as Commissioner
12 while you've done amazing work, I'm sure you'd like
13 to be able to see more families moving into permanent
14 housing, and that is our biggest challenges as
15 Council Members, because while we want to work with
16 the Administration and understand that we have
17 families that are going to be placed in home-- you
18 know, shelters and trying to understand your strategy
19 on homeless placement, it's still a challenge for us.
20 It's still something that we see that we're pouring
21 in millions of dollars. We understand that we're
22 being supportive of the need, and it just seems like
23 it's not enough, and I understood and I saw your
24 graph on-- look, this is almost a perfect storm.
25 Everything that could have gone wrong went wrong, and

3 this is where we are with our families. Can you say-
4 - could we be-- could we have been worse off if we
5 didn't do the things that you've done, or can you
6 walk me through? How do we get to where we are right
7 now, and you know, and instilling us the faith that
8 these are the right strategies, that we're not going
9 to be here two years from now kind of revisiting a
10 different set of goals?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, clearly not
12 having rental assistance wasn't the right strategy,
13 because we saw an increase of homelessness of 38
14 percent between 2011 and 2014. The trajectory from
15 1994 to 2014 was a 115 percent increase in
16 homelessness and an acceleration of that trend during
17 the years 2011-2014 with that 38 percent growth in
18 homelessness. I think as we've shown from data, we
19 can certainly provide further briefings without the
20 reinstitution-- without reinstituting rental
21 assistance and the rehousing strategies and without
22 the Prevention First strategies. In December of
23 2016, we would have approximately 70,000 men, women
24 and children in the shelter system, and we wouldn't
25 be here testifying today with less than 59,000 men,
women and children in the shelter system. So, the

2 strategies that we put in place broke the trajectory
3 of the increase and that's why we're able to be at
4 this point where in the "Turning the Tide" plan,
5 we're able to say we're going to now incrementally
6 reduce the numbers of people who are homeless.
7 You're absolutely right. We want to keep redoubling
8 our efforts. It's one of the reasons why the budget
9 reflects the additions of positions at both HRA and
10 DHS to help increase move-outs from shelter. In
11 terms of the effectiveness of the program, there's
12 certainly nearly 16,000 households who have been able
13 to move out with the rental assistance programs. Out
14 of the 20,000 or so families who have been able to
15 move out of shelter or avoid entry into shelter
16 through our various strategies. It's a combination
17 of the rental assistance-- reinstating rental
18 assistance, the legal services initiatives and the
19 rehousing initiatives including Section 8 assistance
20 and NYCHA that helped us break the trajectory. This
21 budget this year you see additional position that
22 we're adding and the addition of the unit at HRA
23 which will be up and functioning to address income,
24 source of income discrimination together with the
25 efforts that the Human Rights Commission is bringing

3 to bear. We want to work with you. We think
4 breaking the trajectory was an important goal, but we
5 want to do more, and we're going to continue to more,
6 and that's the promise we think of the "Turn the
7 Tide" plan, which has us redoubling our efforts on
8 move-outs including these rental assistance programs
9 in moving forward. We welcome working with anyone in
10 the Council, any Council Members with local landlords
11 or brokers. We take input all the time from brokers
12 and landlords about how to make the programs operate
13 as effectively as possible. We have constant calls
14 going into landlords who provide us with apartments,
15 and we take their feedback seriously in the same way
16 we take your feedback seriously.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I'm
18 glad that you mentioned landlords, because that's my
19 next question. And I know that we're putting in some
20 focus on bonuses and the bonus program for landlords.
21 If landlords are hesitant to accept the program even
22 with the landlord bonus program, why do you believe
23 that or expect that a significant number of
24 individuals and families will be able to move from
25 shelters to permanent housing? It just seems like
the actual program is something that landlords

2 aren't' necessarily accepting. You have faith that
3 this bonus is supposed to help, where we haven't
4 necessarily seen that it has. So can you walk us
5 through the numbers of why you think this, I guess,
6 this bonus would help certain landlords and why
7 you're putting so much faith in this?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, that bonus we
9 have been paying during this period of time. Let's
10 also come back to what have the results been.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I'm
12 sorry.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's okay. I want
14 to come back to what the results have been. I mean,
15 in terms of the efficacy of the programs, we'd have
16 to ask one of the 16,000 households who had landlords
17 that participated in the program who have moved out
18 of shelter or avoided entrance shelter as a result of
19 rental assistance. That's 16,000 fewer households in
20 shelter as part of that 57,000 people that have
21 avoided or been able to move out as a result of the
22 programs that we put in place. Again, we've seen the
23 results of no rental assistance. To the extent that
24 landlords are reluctant to participate I programs
25 because of the experience of Advantage in which the

2 rug was pulled out from underneath of them. first,
3 we think that 16,000 households who have been able to
4 participate in rental assistance programs are a
5 pretty significant piece of evidence that there are
6 landlords that are producing, but for those that are
7 participating, but for those that are not
8 participating, that's what both the Human Rights
9 Commission and HRA are stepping up enforcement
10 efforts because the local law prohibits source of
11 income discrimination.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So,
13 I want to-- I have several additional questions. One
14 is on the immigrant and the expansion of ActionNYC,
15 some follow up on transparency and units of
16 appropriation. We seem to have a lot of budget items
17 that are kind of under one title and we need to get
18 better explanations, but I'd like to come on my
19 second round so that we can give the Chair an
20 opportunity to ask his questions, and members. We've
21 been joined by the Public Advocate, Council Member
22 Levine, Gibson, Wills, Rosenthal, and Torres, and
23 after the Chair we will hear from Public Advocate
24 James followed by Council Member Cabrera.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
3 Chair Ferreras-Copeland. I'll just ask a couple
4 questions, Commissioner. First off, just following
5 up on Chair Ferreras-Copeland's questions. I do
6 think that it's a significant-- there remains a
7 significant challenge with regard to the uptake of
8 LINC. One thing that we don't see there is what our
9 goals are for the number of families or households
10 that we expect each LINC program to be taken up at.
11 Do we-- does HRA maintain that, or is it kind of
12 adjusting that as time goes on?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I think we see
14 the, you know, follow-up on a comment that I just
15 made to the Finance Chair. The result of having no
16 rental assistance is a 38 percent increase in
17 homelessness. The result of having rental assistance
18 plus the rehousing plans is a break in the trajectory
19 of homelessness. The result of this streamlining
20 that we will be moving forward with over the summer,
21 we think will create more opportunities for more
22 move-outs, and I think that-- again, I want to
23 caution us against looking at success or failures
24 with any individualized programs, because the
25 programs are tailored to individuals. The shelter

2 system is made up of families and single adults and
3 adult families that have varying needs, and because
4 one program has moved out fewer in relation to
5 another program, we don't want to back away from, but
6 we are very much interested to continuing to work
7 with you and other Council Members. You've made some
8 very good suggestions about increasing, focusing on
9 staffing for moving people out of shelter. It came
10 up at prior hearings, and you've seen some reflection
11 of adding additional DHS and HRA positions to help
12 move that process forward. We think the model budget
13 process for the not-for-profit providers will add
14 additional resources to help with move-outs. So, the
15 combination of the streamlining plus the greater
16 investment in the not-for-profit sector and in our
17 own staffing we think we'll begin to address some of
18 I think the very constructive points that you have
19 raised at these hearings.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I mean, there
21 also needs to be something of an outreach effort or a
22 PR campaign. I've told you this before and I've said
23 it publicly before, I've been working with the
24 constituent for six months now. When she had the
25 voucher in hand, she had a City FEPS voucher in hand,

2 I would call, me, Steve Levin, Council Member, call
3 real estate agents and say I have a constituent with
4 a voucher in hand, please call me back. I see you
5 have an apartment for 1,750 in so and so
6 neighborhood. I don't get a call back. I don't get a
7 call back, let alone her when she's out there trying
8 to get people to take her voucher herself. So, you
9 know, there needs to be a framework, and I thank you
10 for adding those new staff lines at DHS staff.
11 Anyway, it was--

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] And HRA
13 as well.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And HRA as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And HRA. And I think
17 as you said, I mean, I think that there needs to be
18 within each shelter whether it's a Tier II shelter, a
19 hotel, cluster, there needs to be a housing
20 specialist who is not a caseworker, who's not a case
21 manager, whose entire job is to find people housing
22 and to call and pester and bug real estate brokers
23 and agents and landlords to take families with these
24 vouchers. I mean, I've never-- can't-- it's
25 unimaginable these calls. I have somebody with a

2 government voucher, 1250, you know, for a
3 \$1,700/\$1,750 apartment. I mean, it's a pretty great
4 deal. I don't get a call back, not a call back.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So again I want to
6 emphasize to you but also take advantage of the
7 public forum here, we have information, we want to
8 encourage clients or Council Members or advocates to
9 call us. We're prepared to take legal action against
10 such landlords who simply refuse to participate in
11 these programs. I want to again thank the landlords
12 who have been able-- who have participated in these
13 programs who enable 1,600 households to move out, but
14 we want to enable more families to move out, and
15 that's why there's an investment in the enforcement,
16 and you're absolutely right, we want to make more
17 information available to people. I think it's a very
18 constructive suggestion to work with you and without
19 exterior organizations to make sure that information
20 is out there about landlords not participating and
21 the consequences of not participating. I mean, the
22 Human Rights Commission just got 100,000 dollar fine,
23 a penalty against somebody, and more recently a
24 33,000 dollar penalty for people not participating.
25 That information needs to be known. There have been

2 various lawsuits that advocacy organizations have
3 brought, and we're happy to be supportive of them,
4 and next time someone doesn't call you back we're
5 happy to take legal action on your client's behalf
6 against that landlord or broker.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to rent
8 stabilized housing, so as you pointed out in your
9 testimony, the loss of rent stabilized housing is a
10 major driver of homelessness and the ten-fold
11 increase or more than ten-fold increase in legal
12 services dollars that this Administration put
13 forward, and I thank you for that, and that's great.
14 Beyond that, on the front end, how does your
15 agencies, how do they work with HPD and DHCR to
16 identify units that were improperly destabilized?
17 You know, that-- how does-- I mean, is there a
18 framework in place to engage with DHCR to identify
19 units that were destabilized incorrectly or at risk
20 of being destabilized incorrectly through illegal
21 rent increases or what have you? You know, clearly
22 some of those units that we lost were not-- were lost
23 illegally.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know, HPD is a
25 good partner, and we work with HPD to try to address

2 these kinds of problems. One area in which we
3 believe we can have impact is that as we move forward
4 with our cluster closure plan, those are units that
5 were taken out of rent stabilization. We intend to
6 provide that kind of notice to DHCR so that they can
7 determine whether or not those units are now
8 correctly being rented out, and whenever we can get
9 information about apartments being improperly taken
10 out of rent stabilization, we'll take that same
11 action.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, but beyond
13 just the units under your purview, what about the,
14 you know, the vast number of units that either were
15 taken out illegally? These are people, these are
16 units that you don't have a nexus point with until
17 that family comes into a HomeBase program or comes
18 into Path having been evicted, or is somehow in
19 contact with your legal services provider, but at the
20 front end, I mean, is there a way to look at this as
21 a preventative measure to engage with DHCR and if
22 that requires legislative, state legislative, change,
23 maybe that's something that the City can put forward
24 as a state legislative request to the Assembly and
25 senate about how we can be more proactive on losing

2 rent stabilized units. I mean, the fact of the
3 matter is we can never build ourselves out of an
4 affordability crisis. We can't. There's just not
5 enough land. There's not enough money. We don't
6 have the wherewithal. We don't have the time. We
7 don't have-- it's impossible to do. The key to
8 affordable housing in New York City is rent
9 stabilized housing. We're losing it. I mean, often
10 times we're losing it improperly and illegally.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think you're
12 right, and the "Turn the Tide" plan and in the
13 testimony, we certainly-- that was one of the drivers
14 of the increases in homelessness during the decade
15 prior to this Administration. We'd be happy to work
16 with you and welcome any discussion about what you
17 think could be strengthened in terms of a prevention
18 role looking back at units that might have been
19 improperly taken out. I think the role that we can
20 plan in terms of our scope of authority currently is
21 to focus on the units that were taken out of rent
22 stabilization for us as cluster apartments during
23 that 17-year-old program, and as they are emptied, we
24 can certainly make sure that DHCR is aware that they
25 are now out of that exemption for rent stabilization.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to pivot to--
3 are you familiar with the Support Our Sanctuary
4 campaign, not-for-profits asking for a 12 percent
5 increase in OTPS due to long-term capital
6 disinvestment? This isn't-- and you spoke about DHS
7 contracted programs, shelters. I'm taking a kind of
8 bigger picture approach here to the entire human
9 services sector. Have you engaged with them in that
10 effort, and what's the reaction right? And how-- I
11 mean, clearly there's-- this is across the board.
12 Taking out the efforts that are appreciated and you
13 detailed them about going back with the COLA
14 increase, right sizing the DHS contacts, and I know
15 that you spoke to those in detail, but broadly in the
16 human services sector, and this is not just HRA, but
17 this is more broadly. There's a significant-- you
18 know, the same force that are at play for individuals
19 and their rent increases over the years that you
20 spoke about, those same forces are at work with not-
21 for-profits, and they're seeing their rents go up,
22 and they're seeing, you know, just their general OTPS
23 costs, insurance, all of those things, and we have
24 not kept up with it. And that's why they're asking

2 for 12 percent because there's been such a historic
3 disinvestment there.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As a citywide
5 approach, that's why the Mayor established the Not-
6 for-profit Resiliency Committee, but in parallel to
7 that effort we wanted to evaluate the kind of
8 investments that had been made or not made frankly
9 for many years for our shelter providers, which is
10 what results in that nearly 200 million dollar
11 investment in the not-for-profit shelter provider
12 sector to rationalize and increase rates that hadn't
13 been increased in years, and so there are two
14 processes going on in the City. One is that Not-for-
15 profit Resiliency process which is looking at the
16 issues that you're raising, but we were given the
17 ability and the authority and the opportunity to
18 address particular program within our purview, which
19 was shelter providers that weren't being provided
20 with enough money to maintain their shelters and
21 provide the services that we thought were important,
22 and so the Mayor and the Office of Management and
23 Budget provided us with the funding to be able to do
24 that, and we're moving forward with that process to
25 address I think some of the problems that you're

2 raising that we identified during the 90-day review.

3 There was a reason why the numbers of violations
4 built up in the not-for-profit shelters. There was a
5 reason why there are some of the service issue that
6 built up in those shelters, and so in engaging the
7 shelter providers, particularly in concert with the
8 overall umbrella organization, Homeless Services
9 United, we took a lot of important input to help
10 model budgets, got the Mayor and OMB's support for it
11 in this budget, which we appreciate, and I think
12 we're going to start to see some good results for
13 clients and for the not-for-profit organizations
14 beginning in FY18.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, but if those
16 issues were present with shelter providers, those
17 issues are likely present in other not-for-profits
18 that aren't shelter providers or in the other areas
19 of those not-for-profits that also provide shelters.
20 So, you know, there are some-- you know, if you look
21 at some organizations, CAMBA or Henry Street, these
22 are organizations that have, you know, much broader
23 array of services beyond just a shelter. Are we
24 looking more broadly at the entire sector in saying,
25 you know, these are community partners? We clearly

2 cannot do the work ourselves. The City government
3 cannot effectively provide social services on our
4 own. That's why we rely on the not-for-profit sector
5 and these community partners that we've been working
6 with, in some cases for a century or more. We, you
7 know, there's been a historic disinvestment and
8 people are going on the same, you know, rent lines
9 that they were 10 years ago even though their rent
10 has increased 15 percent, and they-- you know,
11 there's only so much you can do. So, I would ask at
12 this point that as we're approaching the budget
13 adoption that there be, you know, the discussion be
14 ramped up about really realistically what do we need
15 to do to get our not-for-profit providers, our
16 partners, those that we rely on to be on a sound
17 footing as they move forward and are able to provide
18 the services that we need them to do.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate your
20 comments, and I'll say appreciate the support for an
21 extraordinary investment of 200 million dollars in
22 various forms, including 146 million in direct
23 investment for the not-for-profit sector which is a
24 very important partner in our addressing issues that
25 have built up for years in the shelter system,

2 disinvestment being one of them that we identified
3 during the 90-day review.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to-- I
5 think Council Member Rosenthal's probably going to
6 ask some follow-up on that. And then my last
7 question, then I'll turn it over to the Public
8 Advocate, around the DHS Capital Plan. So, what you
9 have identified in your testimony, I think there
10 remains some additional clarification needed. Of the
11 650 million that you identified, 315.9 was added in
12 the Executive Plan to renovate and expand existing
13 family and adult shelter sites. Can-- we're having a
14 hard time in the Capital Plan finding a breakdown, a
15 further breakdown, of how much was going towards
16 renovation and how much was going towards expansion,
17 because if we're looking at over the next five years
18 90 new shelters, it would be good to know-- and 30
19 expanded shelters-- where all of that is going and
20 how much of that is going to be going towards
21 renovation, expansion and new shelter capacity.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I know this came up
23 at the OMB hearing as well, and you know, the
24 Director Dean Fuleihan's testimony is similar to what
25 mine is going to be which is that there are a number

2 of aspects going on at once to try to address shelter
3 system problems that have built up over many years.
4 Going back to our 17 Adopted Budget, there are funds
5 put in for capital improvements in the existing
6 shelters. The reduction in violations, 14,000
7 reduction violations that with our not-for-profit
8 partners we've achieved. There are still some
9 underlying capital needs that needed to get
10 addressed, and as I referenced in the testimony is
11 about 210 different capital projects that are ongoing
12 to spend approximately 300 million dollars that is
13 for those kinds of repairs that were part of the
14 discussion in last year's budget, and they're moving
15 along in terms of those numbers of projects. The 90
16 shelters, several of which are already now up and
17 running, are being funded through the rate that pays
18 for their operations out of the budget that we are
19 currently projecting to pay for shelters. So, for
20 example, these shelters will be less expensive than
21 using commercial hotels.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: This is part of the
23 expense budget?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: This is part of the
25 expense budget for the 90 shelters. So, again,

3 moving through these different issues which I
4 understand why they're-- I understand why you're
5 asking the question. The capital dollars, half of
6 that number, 300 or so, is relating to things that
7 were put in the budget last year to begin to address
8 the repairs that have been needed for many years in
9 city-owned buildings, many which are run-- are housed
10 shelters run by not-for-profits. Then there's the
11 expense budget funding of the 90 shelters, and then
12 there is, as we said in the "Turning the Tide plan,"
13 that we would take 30 existing shelters over the life
14 of the plan and renovate them to make better use of
15 the physical space. These were some of the shelter
16 sites that were opened under the Koch Shelter Plan
17 many years ago. They need upgrading, but use of the
18 land in which they're on may provide opportunities
19 for permanent housing development, may provide
20 opportunities from more shelter beds at a particular
21 location than were determined 20, 30 years ago. So
22 there's money in the Capital Plan to move forward
23 without work. The process for identifying which of
24 those shelters will be expanded is one in which HPD
25 and HRA and DHS will be evaluating at existing sites
and making determinations about which ones will be

3 most cost effective, but rather than put the money in
4 as we go each year, we wanted to make it clear going
5 into the plan that this was a cost, and so you have a
6 cost, and you're quite right, it doesn't say and it's
7 for these particular projects, but it is actually for
8 the implementation of that aspect of the "Turning the
9 Tide" plan. I understand from a perspective of
10 oversight. As we proceed, we're going to have to say
11 which ones they are and what we're doing and so
12 forth, but we didn't want to go forward with the plan
13 and not have the dollars that were going to be
14 necessary for a piece of it in the multi-year Capital
15 Plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just one last
17 question before I turn it over to the Public
18 Advocate. There's a decrease reflected in the
19 Executive Budget of 24.2 million dollars in Fiscal 18
20 for adult shelter operations. Our notes say that
21 that decrease reflects the methodologies to calculate
22 the need for shelter. That's one every year, as well
23 as the expectation that supportive housing units
24 coming online will decrease the population at
25 shelters. Is that true? That's your understanding
that that reflects an expectation that supportive

3 housing is going to take on? So the new 500 units of
4 scatter site will then be able to absorb some of the
5 single adult shelter operations to the extent-- to
6 the tune of 24.2 million dollars.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I know this
8 came up at the OMB hearing as well, and you know,
9 like the Budget Director, our perspective, and we do
10 this together, is one of the information that we put
11 forward in the "Turning the Tide" plan, which is that
12 there are different dynamics. The family system may
13 be coming down. The single system may be expanding.
14 The adult family system may be expanding. There are
15 many different dynamics that we see in depending on
16 the populations. We do think that the supportive
17 housing development both by us and by other levels of
18 government will have an impact on the shelter census,
19 but we're going to continue to evaluate it to see
20 what the actual impact on the ground is. I'm happy
21 to be able to say that there are not-for-profit
22 providers that responded to the scatter site carrying
23 it-- I'm sorry, the scatter site supportive housing
24 proposal, and contracts are in process, and they
25 expect to begin to move forward in July, and then
we'll be able to evaluate is it having the impact

2 that we think it will. We do think that supportive
3 housing has a major impact on our ability to move
4 forward, and that's why the Mayor made that historic
5 commitment in permanent housing for the single adult
6 population, frankly.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, so you-- but
8 there's an expectation that the census will come down
9 to the extent that there will be a savings of 24.2
10 million dollars that may or may not-- I mean, our--
11 if we're seeing that the cost is not coming down by
12 that amount,--

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Well--

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Will you be coming
15 back in the November Plan and asking for that?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll have to make
17 adjustments. We have a, you know, legal obligation
18 to provide shelter, and we will do so, but we do
19 think that supportive housing holds great promise to
20 have an impact on the census.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, we'll keep an
22 eye on that. Okay, I'm going to turn it over to--
23 we've also been joined by Council Member Rafael
24 Salamanca, and turn it over to the Public Advocate
25 Letitia James.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And we've
3 been joined by Council Member Lander.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Good morning,
5 Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Hi, how are you?

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I'm fine.

8 Commissioner, I was looking at the 2018 HRA Executive
9 Plan budget and noticed that 59.2 percent, more than
10 half of your budget is for medical assistance, and I
11 guess that's related to Medicaid. Is that correct?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, my question
14 to you is, I-- of that amount, how much of that is
15 reimbursed by the Federal Government? And/or the
16 State?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. That amount
18 of money that you see in our budget is almost all tax
19 levy, because--

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] It's
21 all City.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: the federal funds
23 may not pass through. I'm not-- I think I know where
24 you're about to go, but we can certainly give you a
25 more granular explanation, but the dollars that

2 you're seeing in that budget are monies that don't
3 stand in isolation. They're part of an overall
4 Medicaid program that relies upon federal funding.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, do we
6 anticipate that that number will grow in the event
7 that Obamacare is repealed?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the Mayor
9 said it well on the day that the skinny federal
10 budget was described by the Federal Administration,
11 which is we're going to work very closely as we have
12 been with our two terrific senators and with our
13 congressional delegation, and that what is initially
14 proposed is not necessarily going to be the ultimate
15 outcome. It's just an opening proposal, and we're
16 going to continue to address challenges to our
17 residents and challenges to the clients of our agency
18 by the good working relationship we've had with you
19 and with other citywide officials in the Council and
20 the Assembly and the Senate, representatives from our
21 city, and the Governor and the Congress and the
22 Senators, and we're going to keep raising challenges.
23 I think there's another issue that came up on that
24 very first day, the impact on us for the HEAP [sic]
25 program.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a program that
4 was targeted to be eliminated to benefit 700,000 New
5 Yorkers. So, Medicaid is something that's vital to
6 our clients and vital to New York City Residents, and
7 there's a great deal of harm that could be caused as
8 a result of various proposals, but we're going to
9 continue to fight those proposals.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And to what
11 extent, what impact will MRT, the Medicaid Redesign
12 Proposal or Team, have as well as the Medicaid
13 waiver? What impact will that have on this, on your
14 budget?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean, the budget--
16 the Medicaid process assumes a state takeover that's
17 being phased in.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And we--

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] So,
21 this number will be-- will decrease over time?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No. I think as you
23 see our Medicaid caseload is different because as
24 different parts of our caseload have been taken over
25 by the state, those-- that's why you see a decrease

2 in the numbers of direct HRA clients. None the less,
3 we are still managing the substantial part of
4 Medicaid caseload and working with the state in
5 various services that are provided? So, the state
6 takeover is continuing, but you really see that
7 reflected on the front end in terms of numbers of
8 cases as opposed to the dollars.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: On another issue,
10 homelessness children in public schools, are their
11 families-- I heard that there were family assistance,
12 but there are insufficient number of family
13 assistance to address the needs of children who are
14 homeless in their educational needs.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: A new initiative that
16 is reflected in the Department of Education's budget
17 as opposed to our budget is funding social work
18 services in schools with the greatest concentration
19 of homeless children. But I also want to take this
20 time to emphasize something that I know you have been
21 concerned about, and the reason why this issue arises
22 in the context of Department of Education's budget is
23 the issue that I saw originally when you and I were
24 at the Legal Aid Society years and years ago when my
25 first homeless clients would be from Brooklyn and

3 they'd be placed in the Bronx, or my first homeless
4 clients would be from Staten Island and they'd be
5 placed in Manhattan, and children commuting to school
6 from placements. That's the core principle of the
7 "Turning the Tide" plan, which is to say the system
8 is built up haphazardly so that some schools reflect
9 the numbers of homeless children because of the
10 numbers of shelters there, needs to be completely
11 reformed so that our systems of placing people in
12 shelter keeps kids in the schools they're in and
13 doesn't create another barrier for a child to learn.
14 So that's the vision and that's where we going to get
15 to. In the meantime, the investment of the
16 Department of Education's budget is intended to deal
17 with I think some of the impact of the current
18 policies which I understand you're attempting to
19 address, or you are--

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] So,
21 I know this is not DOE, but I'm told that there's
22 high turnover, one, because of the low salary and--
23 so there's high turnover, low salary, and do the
24 assistants actually go to the shelters and not
25 clusters, or is it a combination, or are they
assigned to the schools and the schools alone?

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the
4 Department of Education saw the greatest impact by
5 folks in the social work services in the schools.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: In the schools.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And they found that
8 that was going to have the greatest impact.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is there any
10 attempt to have the assistants go where the children
11 are and to assist them in their educational needs at
12 their place of residence which may be a shelter or a
13 hotel and/or a cluster site?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I'm focusing
15 on what the Department of Education found as the
16 greatest impact.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: They tried a number
19 of different approaches, and they found the greatest
20 impact was literally engaging children with social
21 services in the schools.

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. Onto another
23 subject--

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] The
25 addition of buses, on the other hand, has been an
effort to make sure the kids actually get to school

2 given all the problems that I described for you that
3 are built up--

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
5 Right.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: over all these years
7 of children being placed in different boroughs.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, and I
9 want to thank both of the Chairs for their
10 indulgence. I have three more questions, and my
11 question has to do with human service contracts.
12 I've heard from human service providers, and I
13 believe Chair Levin mentioned this, they've
14 experienced long wait times to get their payments
15 creating a hardship for not-for-profit who have tight
16 cash flows, which is primarily the smaller ones. The
17 larger organizations obviously can cover the delay,
18 but it's affecting a lot of local, small,
19 organizations of color, and a significant number of
20 them are having a difficult time making ends meet.
21 What do we plan on doing to raise the rates for these
22 human services providers in City of New York [sic].

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, so if I could
24 address two different issues with that. First, in
25 terms of the raising the rates that our shelter

2 providers are receiving, this budget reflects 146
3 million dollar investment to increase services/rates
4 in for our shelter providers as part of a reform we
5 announced during the 90-day review which is that we
6 were going to rationalize the rates. We implemented
7 a policy of getting input from the providers to do
8 that, and we expect to be able to introduce model
9 budgets in FY18 to raise up providers that had had
10 many years of disinvestment in their contracts. When
11 all of the other aspects of our increased services
12 and shelters are added, it's approximately a 200
13 million dollar, more than 200 million dollar
14 investment in the not-for-profit sector services in
15 the shelters. They're important partners for us. I
16 think another issue is respect to contracting is
17 important to cover, and as I indicated in my
18 testimony, when we began with the integration of HRA
19 and DHS, and under the umbrella of Department of
20 Social Services we still had contracts from FY14 and
21 FY15 that hadn't been done. All of those have been
22 eliminated. Ninety-nine percent of the FY16
23 contracts have been registered. There are three
24 outstanding, two with the provider, one's pending
25 registration. Of the FY17 contracts, 97 percent of

2 them are registered. Three are with the Comptroller
3 and has been very good partner to get-- to move
4 forward with this. Three are with providers, and
5 four we're completing the reductions on. So, there's
6 10 there, and then out of the amendments there-- 87
7 percent of them. Their contract amendments, 87
8 percent of them are done. This is 950 transactions
9 that we have done in literally one year to clean up
10 and address problems that have been built up, and
11 then by the way, since I've testified in March, and
12 that's what that data is based on, there's another
13 hundred plus new contracts that we're processing
14 because we made determinations that we should give
15 new needs to providers and their COLA and so forth.
16 So those are underway, and our projection is-- we'll
17 also begin the FY18 contracts. Our projection is
18 when July 1 begins that for the first time we'll have
19 the majority of FY18 contracts in place given all of
20 this cleanup. When you add up the additional
21 transactions it will have been doing-- leaving FY18
22 aside-- 1,052 contract transactions in one year, and
23 the FY18's will be another 300. So that's
24 essentially three procurement process. I'm sorry,
25 four procurement processes done in a single year by

2 an agency to address these issues. However, if
3 you've got particular providers that have particular
4 issues, I will--

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
6 Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: be happy to discuss
8 them offline to see if their issues are particular.
9 There are some providers, and we're very blessed to
10 be working with terrific providers, but there are
11 some who've we had some challenges with and we've
12 eliminated certain providers. I don't know if any of
13 them are in that category. We've eliminated
14 providers that we didn't think we're providing
15 appropriate services.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Well, let me just
17 say that overall the human service contracts are
18 basically not sufficient enough, the amount of money
19 that they receive to support the-- they're actually--
20 the actual cost of delivering services, and whatever
21 we can do in the budget going forward that would be
22 greatly appreciated, because as you know, most of the
23 workers, employees at most of these human service
24 contracts are women, and it's really critically
25 important that we speak about their own challenges

2 and their own personal lives as they continue to do
3 the work of the angels. With regard to-- I know it
4 was mentioned earlier, sources of income continues to
5 be a problem. A lot of these brokers and landlords
6 just are refusing to vouchers. I know it's an issue
7 for the Commission on Human Rights, but we, again,
8 can talk offline about what we can do to address
9 that. I'm hearing it wherever I go throughout the
10 City of New York. My last two questions is AccessNYC
11 which screens for over 30 benefit, government benefit
12 programs, but you only apply online or recertify for
13 three benefits. Why aren't many more of the benefits
14 available for people to apply online? Why only
15 three?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me address
17 source of income discrimination. First, I want to
18 encourage anyone who's listening or watching that
19 there's a flyer we have; we can make it available to
20 any elected officials for clients that makes it clear
21 that it's illegal for landlords to refuse to rent to
22 clients, and we want to make sure that this
23 available. This is what's helping us enhance
24 enforcement efforts that I talked about earlier in
25 terms of the penalties that the Human Rights

3 Commission's been able to obtain, plus the
4 enforcement that now HRA has been funded to begin to
5 bring. In terms of applying online for benefits, the
6 benefits that are within the purview of HRA we have
7 created the ability to apply for benefits consistent
8 with what the Federal and State governments permit us
9 to do. So, we now, as I indicated in my testimony,
10 you can recertify online for food stamps. You can
11 apply online for food stamps. You can recertify
12 online for public assistance. Given state and
13 federal limitations, you cannot currently apply for
14 public assistance online, and then we provided
15 renewal forms for Medicaid because the application
16 process for Medicaid is through the state health
17 agencies. So, where there are benefits that HRA
18 provides, we've created a structure to be able to
19 apply online whenever we can consistent with Federal
20 and State law.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. My
22 last question is, as you know, in my former district
23 three new shelters opening up or planned on opening
24 up in Prospect Heights/Crown Heights, how many new
25 beds does this represent, and is there a
corresponding reduction in the number of cluster site

2 and hotel beds within these communities? And as you
3 know, this is where Bed Atlantic is located, which is
4 a drop-in center which continue to challenge the
5 community.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. In the
7 community where we're opening a-- we're opening a
8 shelter for single adult men who are senior citizens.
9 It was a particular issue that came up during the 90-
10 day review to create opportunities for senior
11 citizens who are homeless 62 and above to be housed
12 as part of the "Turning the Tide" plan. This is a
13 facility on Bergen [sic] Street for senior citizens
14 for Brooklyn. There are senior citizens from that
15 particular area, and in another part of that
16 particular Community Board there's a shelter that's
17 already been opened for single women with special
18 needs. That community district will see a net
19 decrease of beds of 100 beds as a result of the
20 "Turning the Tide" plan. In a neighboring community
21 district we're opening a families with children
22 shelter. That district is going to see a reduction
23 in sites from 16 to four. So, as we have said all
24 across the City, I'm happy to sit down with anyone

2 who would like us to do so. I think that you and I
3 are actually sitting down soon.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We can show you that
6 in a district that's got clusters, we're closing the
7 clusters. We're closing the hotels. I know Council
8 Member Torres was here a little bit earlier. There
9 are substantial numbers of clusters in his district
10 and hotels. We're closing them all, but on the other
11 hand we opened two shelters in his district because
12 that's how we're replacing capacity as we move
13 forwarded with the borough-based approach.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right. And
15 Commissioner, do you identify individuals who are
16 municipal [sic] workers who happen to be homeless in
17 any of the shelters or cluster sites?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I apologize. I didn't
19 hear your question.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Minentable [sic]
21 workers who happen to be living in your shelters
22 and/or your homeless and your cluster sites, do you
23 identify them?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're very focused
25 on people who are working and particularly anyone

2 who's working in the city workforce, and we make
3 special efforts to try to reconnect them to housing.
4 The community through the various benefit programs we
5 have, we want to help them relocate as quickly as
6 possible.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
9 you, Public Advocate James. We will now hear from
10 Council Member Cabrera, followed by Council Member
11 Grodenchik, followed by Council Member Perkins.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you to all
13 the Chairs. Welcome, Commissioner, and thank you.
14 We've had offline conversation about reducing cluster
15 site. I do have the most in the City. I know you
16 mentioned Torres, but I do have the most, and
17 hopefully I will not have that distinction that many
18 Council Members don't like to have. I want to ask
19 you a question. In light of-- I was very, very, very
20 happy to hear all of the investments that you're
21 making towards technology, but in just being
22 contextual here and to just what happened this
23 weekend all across the world, 200,000 computers being
24 affected. In particular it caught my attention the
25 Department of Health in England was affected by this

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2 bug firmware, right, "WannaCry." What would be the
3 impact if we were to be infected by, you know, a
4 computer bug? What would be the impact in all of
5 this new technology systems that you're going to have
6 in place?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: First of all, I hope
8 not to have a falling out with you, because we have
9 worked together for many years.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I do have to say
12 that Council Member Torres has more cluster sites
13 than you do.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Then I must have
15 old numbers, and I'm happy to hear that. Thank you.
16 Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: He has 71 and you
18 have 39.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay, great,
20 great. So we're working towards that goal.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But we will be
22 working--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing]
24 Beautiful.
25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: to close them. I
3 know Council Member Salamanca is going to be asking
4 the same thing. We're working to close them in your
5 district.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Fantastic.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: With respect to
8 technology, I know that DoITT and our technology team
9 within our agency, the Department of Social Services
10 has been very much focused on the kinds of problems
11 you're describing, and we're very much focused on
12 making sure that there's not a repetition of what
13 happened on Friday around the world here, and
14 obviously the impact is something that we want to
15 work very hard to avoid.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Has DoITT
17 informed you that there's been attempt for hacks?
18 Did they-- are they in the usual business relaying
19 that information to you?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we have a
21 very broad scope at the Department of Social
22 Services, but I want to refer your inquiry to them.
23 My focus has been on making sure that we have
24 everything up and running in our own systems, which
25 we do to address these kinds of things.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And the
3 technology capital, is it going to be pretty much
4 outsourced, or is it in-house? Do you have a in-
5 house?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There- we have-- I
7 think as our testimony highlighted, we're insourcing
8 headcount. There previously had been consultants,
9 but our capital relates to actual systems upgrades.
10 Some of the systems that the Department of Homeless
11 Services in particular have been in need of upgrading
12 for a number of years, and the HRA funding reflects
13 the continued enhancements to our technology to make
14 access to benefits more seamless, and to address the
15 issues that I raised in my testimony about ensuring
16 that landlords and tenants have the access to
17 information about rent payments.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Beautiful. And
19 how many youth shelters we have now, and how many we
20 going to end up having within five years?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I can get you the
22 exact bed count, but the aim is to reach the goals
23 that we set in the 90-day review, which is about 750
24 beds.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Is there like a
3 waiting list for young people trying to get into--
4 because I know we have like Covenant House and such,
5 they always seem to be packed out.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I mean,
7 those programs are run by the Department of Youth and
8 Community Development, DYCD. The steps that we're
9 taking to work together with them is to ensure that
10 if youth have to move between the two systems that we
11 can ensure that they're able to get beds in the adult
12 system, but also as part of the streamlining of the
13 rental assistance that I talked about in response of
14 the questions from the two Chairs, the availability
15 of rental assistance to youth aging out of the youth
16 beds who would otherwise be coming into adult system,
17 we're going to be making rental assistance available
18 to avert that transfer between the two systems.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Commissioner, my
20 last question since I only have 40 seconds. And that
21 is, some of the nonprofits, the biggest complaint I
22 get from them is their ability to get the monies,
23 their funding, after they have provided services, and
24 sometimes it takes six months, a year, what's-- where
25 is the holdback here?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think the
3 issue there is the issue that I raised that I
4 responded to the Public Advocate within to Chair
5 Levin, which is as part of addressing the contracting
6 process when we integrated DHS and HRA, we had to
7 address the contracts that needed to be processed,
8 and essentially over the course of this year we will
9 have done a total of 1,052 contract transactions to
10 create a situation in which for the first time in
11 years our shelter providers will have contracts in
12 place when the fiscal year begins. We believe we'll
13 have the majority of FY18 contracts in place. As of
14 now, we've reduced the number of FY16 contracts.
15 There are no 14 or 15 problems. The FY16 contracts,
16 there are three outstanding. It's 99 percent of them
17 are done. FY17 contracts, 97 percent of them are
18 done. There are 10 outstanding. Three of them are
19 pending registration and the Comptroller's been very
20 helpful here, and there are 87 percent of the
21 contract amendments, which arise during the course of
22 the years, have been done, and we expect to have
23 completed this resolution of a longstanding problem
24 as we said we would do when we announced the reforms
25 a year ago.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well, thank you,
3 Commissioner, and I can't recall an Administration
4 that has devoted so much funding and strategies like
5 I seen it now. So, thank you so much. Keep up the
6 great work.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
9 you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council
10 Member Grodenchik followed by Council Member Perkins
11 followed by Council Member Levine.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
13 Chair. Thank you, Chairs. Good morning. Good
14 afternoon, Commissioner. I have to tell you I am very
15 distressed that in 4,000-odd words, I didn't count
16 them all but I did estimate, there is not a single
17 word that talks about emergency food. The Council is
18 united. It's maybe unprecedented in my short time
19 here. Fifty-one members led by our Speaker. It was
20 a centerpiece of her State of the City Address that
21 she gave in Brooklyn. All the members of the Council
22 have signed on including people that didn't sign on
23 last year. We are not talking about hundreds of
24 millions of dollars here. Last year, in this current
25 fiscal budget, there's 16 million dollars allocated

2 for emergency food. The Mayor's budget sends it back
3 to 11 million. We are asking for 22 million, and I
4 cannot understand for the life of me what the holdup
5 is and why you didn't talk about it this morning.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, I know that this
7 also came up at the OMB hearing, and Dean Fuleihan
8 answered that. We made together with the Council
9 certain one-time investments to deal with capacity.
10 We've been working with the Helmsley [sp?] Trust and
11 others to evaluate what's needed for capacity, but
12 that we intend to work with the Council about the
13 funding level in 18. The funding level in 17
14 reflected an agreement between the Council and the
15 Administration about prioritizing capacity
16 development, and we intend to work with you. I got
17 the letter signed by all the members on-- at the end
18 of last week from Council Member Levin, and as Dean
19 Fuleihan said, we intend to work with you on this as
20 part of the budget process.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate
22 that, and we're going to hold you, even though you're
23 not the Mayor, but we're going to hold you
24 responsible for that, if that's okay. In your
25 testimony you again talked about the plan to open 90

2 new shelters or 90 new locations. Is that reflected
3 in the out-year budgets? How is that-- how is that--
4 - how much money is that going to cost us, and is it
5 totally reflected in what you talked about today?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It is. The new
7 shelter facilities are funded through the Executive
8 Budget, through the dollars that we're using to pay
9 for shelters now. We're shrinking the footprint of
10 the shelter system by 45 percent.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I don't know
12 if I necessarily agree with that statement, because
13 the cluster apartments are in apartment buildings,
14 right? And they're generally not known. When you
15 open a shelter, it's pretty well known that there's a
16 shelter there. So, I'm not so sure that I agree with
17 that.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the issue
19 isn't whether it's well known or not, the issue is
20 whether we can develop appropriate services to the
21 people that are housed there. So by shrinking the
22 footprint by 45 percent, we think we'll be able to
23 deliver more effective services to the people that
24 are in shelter to help them get on their feet more
25 quickly. This 17-year-old program, which at its high

2 point rented 3,600 apartments, more than 3,600
3 apartments around the City, is one that did not serve
4 clients well, did not serve communities well.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Can I ask you
6 this question, and appreciate the amount of funding
7 as my colleague Fernando Cabrera just mentioned that
8 is going towards staving off homelessness, what
9 percentage, if you can, of the people that come into
10 the shelter system-- I know that we're looking to
11 provide people who need the services with those
12 services. Can you tell me what percentage of the
13 people that show up at intake actually just need
14 housing as opposed to services, additional services?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I understand your
16 question, but--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
18 Some people are just, you know, victims of bad luck
19 as-- I think the last time we talked about this you
20 said that 40 percent of the people in shelter system
21 are either from evictions, which was about 11
22 percent. The remaining part of that 40 percent was
23 victims of domestic violence. So that leaves us 60
24 percent of people who I think you described as
25 victims of circumstance, which is a pretty large

2 number statistically speaking. But I'm wondering for
3 my edification, for my knowledge, what percentage of
4 the people that come into the intake system who
5 simply just need a place to stay, are working, they
6 don't need the services that other clients that HRA
7 and Homeless Services helps need?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All of the families
9 with children, for example, that come into shelter,
10 we've determined that none of them have another place
11 to stay. They wouldn't be eligible for shelter if
12 they had another place to stay.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I get that.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So whether or not
15 they need supportive services in addition to a place
16 to stay, our challenge is we have to shelter them,
17 and in order to move them out, we need to find a
18 place for them to stay. So services versus a place
19 to stay isn't a factor in what our challenge is each
20 night. Our challenges tonight is to find a roof over
21 somebody's head who has no other place where they can
22 stay, and then our challenges tonight is to be moving
23 people out by finding them places where they can
24 stay. But I think the data that you cited does give
25 a sense of what the drivers of homelessness are in

2 the city in addition to the testimony. The testimony
3 that I provided shows the gap between the numbers of
4 apartments that are affordable and the rent burdens
5 that most New Yorkers have or that substantial
6 numbers of New Yorkers have. And then coupled with,
7 and I appreciate your reference to it, the fact that
8 30 percent of families seeking shelter have history
9 of domestic violence shows you the dimensions of this
10 problem.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. I'll
12 come back to you for round two. Thank you,
13 Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
16 you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council
17 Member Perkins followed by Council Member Levine
18 followed by Council Member Gibson. We've been joined
19 by Council Members Cornegy and Van Bramer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Thank you.
21 Commissioner, I'm just trying to understand. The
22 population is growing of the homeless?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The shelter system
24 has been growing it at 115 percent in the last 20
25 years, including 38 percent in the years 2011/2014.

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2 We believe we've been able to stabilize it where it
3 is now.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: You've been able
5 to stabilize it, you said?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We believe we have
7 stabilized it, and then the plan provides for
8 beginning to reduce it for the first sustained
9 reduction in a decade.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Well, that's
11 good news. In that regard, when do you anticipate
12 the end of homeless?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The factors that are
14 driving home--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: [interposing] At
16 least to the extent that it's not the emergency that
17 it is now.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, it's been in--
19 modern mass homelessness has been an emergency for 40
20 years.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Okay, so--

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] The--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: when do we get
24 passed emergency? When do we end homelessness?
25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the tools
3 that we've put in place now are tools that for the
4 first time have been in place. Driving evictions as
5 a reason for homelessness down to 11 percent is part
6 of getting to where you want to go, and I want to go
7 there, too. Putting 15,000 units of supportive
8 housing in place will drive towards the result that
9 you're appropriately raising. Adding additional
10 domestic violence beds as we are doing will help
11 drive us there. So, all of the-- the rental
12 assistance programs that have already helped together
13 with the rehousing programs, 57,000 people avoid
14 coming into shelter, moving out. All of these are
15 factors that will enable us to not just stabilize the
16 situation but begin to reduce the population for the
17 first time in a decade and get to where you would
18 like us to be.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: And towards the
20 reduction of the population, does that mean somehow
21 the helping families be more or less wealthy so they
22 don't have to be evicted and homeless? What are we
23 doing to remedy that--

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Well,
25 we think--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: [interposing]
3 which creates homelessness to begin with which is an
4 income situation in many instances.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Absolutely, you're
6 absolutely right. That's why I think the prevention
7 first strategy that we have been implementing is
8 aimed at again the appropriate issue you're raising.
9 Providing rent arears to 161,000 households is
10 keeping them from being evicted and becoming homeless
11 for the reasons that I think you're appropriately
12 focused, and providing everyone with a lawyer over
13 this five-year program will help us avoid unnecessary
14 evictions which for years have driven homelessness in
15 New York City. So, there's two strategies plus
16 rental assistance and rehousing assistance are part
17 of what's enabling us to stabilize the growth and to
18 begin to reduce the population. Focusing on I think
19 what you're asking us to focus on, which is keeping
20 people in their homes in the first place.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: And what are the
22 budget implications of that victory? What do we have
23 to do budgetarily [sic] to make that happen? Because
24 actually that's partially what we're talking about.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the legal
3 services expansion is fully funded in our financial
4 plan. It takes a program that was funded at the
5 beginning of the Administration at about six million
6 dollars and moves it to 155 million dollars at the
7 end of the five-year implementation. That will
8 enable everyone in Housing Court to have a
9 representation and eviction proceedings, advice and
10 counsel for those over 200 percent of poverty, full
11 representation for those under 200 percent of
12 poverty. So that's part of-- that's in the financial
13 plan. The provision of rent arrears payments that we
14 have been making is provided for in the plan as well.
15 So, those prevention first strategies were among the
16 first things that the Administration put in place,
17 and now we're beginning to see the result of the
18 investments. Forty-thousand people stayed in their
19 homes as a result of 24 percent drop in evictions in
20 2015/2016.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: So, is it-- in
22 our time, can we end homelessness? Can we conceive
23 of ending homelessness?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think all the
25 pieces we're putting in place are aimed at addressing

2 homelessness in a way it's never been addressed
3 before. There was a prior Deputy Commissioner who
4 once testified that you needed a combination of
5 prevention, decent shelter and permanent housing to
6 finally address homelessness in the City. Over many,
7 many years there weren't sufficient investments in
8 those three pillars of addressing homelessness. I
9 think you see in the budget the priorities of this
10 Administration are reflected in each of those three
11 areas.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: So, I want to
13 thank you for the efforts that y'all are making, and
14 I want to, you know, be supportive as much as
15 possible in conceiving and achieving that goal,
16 because I think we've come to accept homelessness as
17 a fact of life in this city, and I don't want us to
18 accept that. I want us to challenge that pre-
19 conceived notion, that prejudice, and make sure that
20 the children of the homeless generations will not
21 have to suffer through that again, and I think that
22 we ought to look at how do we end homelessness,
23 period.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I take your point
25 very well. I think an approach that's viewed as an

2 emergency situation without the kind of systemic
3 change that's been needed is what got us in to a 17-
4 year-old cluster program. It's going to be an
5 emergency, therefore the City just rented apartments,
6 or it's going to be an emergency, that's why going
7 back to Lindsey, commercial hotels have been used.
8 So the new plan gets us away from dealing with it as
9 an emergency and says, you know what, we can do
10 better for children and individuals who do become
11 homeless in our city, and at the same time we could
12 have a smaller shelter system in terms of numbers or
13 locations.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Thank you very
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
17 you, Council Member. Council Member Gibson followed
18 by Council Member Rosenthal, followed by Council
19 Member Lander.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
21 much. Thank you, Chairs. Good afternoon,
22 Commissioner, to you and your team. Just a few
23 questions. Your testimony outlined I think
24 everything the Department is doing, but we always
25 find questions within your testimony. I wanted to

2 first echo the sentiments of Council Member
3 Grodenchik in just affirming our support of EFAP and
4 making sure that we continue to provide emergency
5 food assistance for the thousands and thousands of
6 families that are going to bed hungry, and then food
7 pantries that are turning away families because they
8 are overwhelmed. Very important for us to continue
9 that conversation this year. I wanted to address
10 cluster sites and the phasing out, coupled with the
11 new plan to create and build out new purpose-built
12 shelters. The saturation of cluster sites now are
13 predominantly in Bronx, Brooklyn and some parts of
14 Manhattan and Queens. And I wanted to find out,
15 number one, what are the current numbers of the
16 phasing out of clusters, and then number two, the
17 process that DHS is working with those existing
18 landlords to identify if those units can be returned
19 to the affordable housing stock? And then number
20 three, I wanted to find out how does that couple with
21 the new plan to create and build brand new shelters,
22 which I assume would be in those same concentrated
23 areas where the cluster sites are to begin with?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you. So, in
25 your district, for example, there are about 37

2 cluster sites that we will be closing as a result of
3 the plan, and also a commercial hotel that will be
4 closing as a result of the plan. So that's 38 sites
5 out of 58 sites that exist in your district that we
6 will be closing as a result of the plan, and as a
7 result of the plan, there are more people,
8 substantially more people housed in your particular
9 district that are becoming homeless from your
10 district, and by taking--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [interposing] That
12 is correct.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And by taking a
14 borough-based approach, we will be able to provide
15 our clients with the opportunity to be housed closer
16 to schools, employment, healthcare, houses of
17 worship, family, friends, really the anchors of life,
18 but we'll be able to do it in a way which over the
19 course of the plan has more equitable siting of
20 facilities, and eliminating the cluster sites and
21 eliminating the commercial hotels will be part of
22 doing that.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the replacement
25 facilities will be intended to replace the capacity

2 to make sure that people can remain in their boroughs
3 close to the communities, and by doing it equitably
4 across the five boroughs, we think we can address
5 some of the problems that you have raised over the
6 years about how this was done in a haphazard way for
7 the last several decades.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. I
9 appreciate acknowledging that. This is something
10 that's been going on for quite some time with
11 oversaturation in certain communities and you
12 acknowledging the District 16 has more capacity for
13 not only the homeless families in our district, but
14 also we're taking on homeless families from other
15 places. So, in the long-term housing conversation,
16 are the families that are from our district
17 prioritized over the other families in terms of long-
18 term housing in our communities to keep them
19 reconnected? Obviously, DV cases are very sensitive,
20 but those residents that want to reconnect and remain
21 in their zip codes are able to do so. Right?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Our priority is to
23 keep-- our priority is to-- excuse me. Our priority
24 is to provide opportunities for families and
25 individuals to be connected to the communities from

2 which they lost their housing because we believe that
3 will help people get back on their feet more quickly.
4 I also want to level set that. It's not a
5 mechanistic one-to-one, you know, formula. Over
6 time, we will have a more equitable siting across all
7 five boroughs on any given night. It can't be a one-
8 to-one match, but it'll be a more equitable approach
9 and the organizing principle of a borough-based
10 approach is community, and that's been missing during
11 the last several decades as the shelter system has
12 developed. We want to give clients, families and
13 individuals, the opportunity to be close to family
14 and friends, because they may be able to reunite with
15 them rather than placing them in some other borough
16 from which they're not-- where they weren't living
17 before they lost their housing.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right. And I
19 guess my last question, I don't have much time, but
20 you and I talk all the time, but the case managers
21 that are working at a local level in many of our
22 shelters are tasked with the responsibility of
23 providing long-term housing. I've mentioned to you
24 and your staff the challenges with some of these
25 subsidy programs where the requirements for families

2 are to remain on public assistance. If they make a
3 dollar over they're ineligible, and many families are
4 grappling with decisions of lowering their hours at
5 work, fulltime to part-time, and other really drastic
6 decisions just so they can keep these subsidies. Is
7 there any update you could provide for us in terms of
8 any changes that you're looking at with some of the
9 requirements, and also if obviously State and Federal
10 oversight and those guidelines as well?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As we go forward
12 with this streamlining of the rental assistance
13 programs which is something that the Finance Chair
14 asked me about as well as the social-- General
15 Welfare Chair. We'll continue to make it clear that
16 we have programs that are available for working
17 families. Thirty-four percent of the families with
18 children in the shelter system are headed by or have
19 an adult in the family that's working. So we have
20 programs that are available for working families. We
21 have programs that are available for working single
22 adults. We have programs that are available for
23 adult families where there are working adults in the
24 household, and then there are other programs
25 available for people who are on public assistance or

2 seniors or people who are receiving disability
3 benefits. So the range of programs will continue to
4 be available in streamlining, but we want to make it
5 clear to clients and to workers that the kind of
6 choice that you are describing isn't a choice that
7 the programs will make them make. However, having
8 said that, there is a 200 percent of poverty
9 eligibility criteria for the working families and
10 working individuals programs and that's a reflection
11 of the creation of that program based upon city and
12 state partnership to put it in place.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great. I
14 look forward to future conversations, and thank you
15 so much for being here, and thank you to our Chairs.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
17 Council Member Gibson. Council Member Helen
18 Rosenthal, and we've also been joined by Council
19 Member Van Bramer if he wasn't mentioned.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
21 much, Chair. Thank you, Commissioner. You know,
22 it's-- your plate is so full. It's-- and your
23 command of the issues is so extraordinary. It's hard
24 to, you know, have an oversight hearing. So, you
25

2 have to start with thanking you for all the hard work
3 that you've done pulling these two agencies together.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And really
6 making an effort here. I'd like to follow up on the
7 contract issue that Council Member Levine and Public
8 Advocate Tish James mentioned. So, I see here in
9 your presentation the work that you've done to
10 renegotiate on the DHS budget contracts for homeless
11 services and that's extraordinary. That's exactly
12 the type of work that we're looking for. So, yes,
13 that's the commitment on contracts that we're looking
14 for. in DHS' budget and in HRA's budget, though,
15 there are smaller contracts that where that work has
16 not been done, and that is-- it's on those contracts
17 that we're asking for increases to the OTPS side of
18 the contracts. So, I would look at the DHS
19 categories for the preventive after care contracts
20 that you have, even the street homeless programs.
21 So, in my district that's like Goddard Riverside
22 contracts. And then on the HRA side, we've got the
23 adult services contracts, you know, HIV/AIDS
24 services, crisis DV programs, employment support
25 services, and Homecare, and it's with those contracts

2 that we have the concerns that were raised earlier
3 where rent has gone up for these smaller social
4 service agencies or the cost of maintenance. I mean,
5 certainly, the one that I'm familiar with, Goddard
6 Riverside or Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center,
7 where they provide some of these services, they're
8 having-- they are closing programs because they can't
9 afford to keep the doors open. So, for example, the
10 contract that Goddard used to have with Saint
11 Timothy's, which is a preschool program, they've had
12 to note that they can no longer help out with that
13 program because they just, you know, over years of
14 having to cover for, you know, OTPS services that are
15 now covered by any government funding, and cities, of
16 course, just apart. I mean, the State hasn't stepped
17 up to fill in their piece of this gap either. So,
18 there's been a lot of discussion over the year about
19 how much money we're talking about, and I think
20 there's-- I think it's confusing because so much
21 money is involved, but as your testimony shows,
22 you're chipping away at this, right? So, you've
23 taken care of a lot of these DHS larger contracts. I
24 think what the senior services sector is talking
25 about now is simply a two percent increase on the

2 OTPS portion of the social service contract. So,
3 citywide, that would come to 20 million dollars for
4 the next fiscal year, Fiscal Year 18. And your
5 contracts are a piece of that. So, if it's a-- if we
6 mirror the COLA increases which have already been
7 budgeted for, thank goodness for this Administration,
8 where we already have in the budget a two percent
9 increase for Fiscal Year 18, additional two percent
10 for 19, additional two percent for 20. If we mirror
11 that on the OTPS side, the cost is 20 million for
12 next year citywide, 40 million the following year,
13 and 60 million in the following year. So given that
14 you're just a tiny portion of that 10 million, and
15 you've already made those commitments to renegotiate
16 when the contracts come due to right size. I think
17 that's what we're really talking about here.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I appreciate
19 the words of support with respect to what we've done
20 with the DHS contracts. In other areas we rebid the
21 Employment Services contracts and we've, you know,
22 we've got recently bid contracts in other areas, and
23 we continue to take a look and see what makes sense.
24 The process of addressing the DHS contracts, I just
25 want to say, has been a year-long process of taking

2 input and trying to make sense of it. So, I don't
3 know the exact dollars for the request that you're
4 asking me. We'll certainly take a look at it, but I
5 just want to also level set that the effort that we
6 put into sort of addressing years of disinvestment in
7 a shelter contracts has been a year-long process to
8 come up with a better path forward.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Chair, can I
10 just follow up with one quick question on the same
11 point?

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.
14 So, to that point, you're right, and I hear you when
15 you say every time we modify contracts we have to
16 open and close, and you know, register again with the
17 Comptroller. That is a nightmare, and the Mayor has
18 committed to trying to fix that through the work
19 group. We haven't made a lot of headway. We've made
20 some, but on that note, I would argue that your HRA
21 contracts, of those you are at 99 percent, as you
22 mentioned. I was surprised to hear on the DHS side
23 the information that I had from April was that 201 of
24 the 300 contracts were registered. So it was a much
25 smaller percentage. Look, you may have fixed all

2 this in the last month. I'm not even kidding, but I
3 just pointed out to emphasize to the public who's
4 listening, look, it's a complicated contracting
5 process and there are a lot of tiny contracts, but
6 they really need the funding.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood. Again,
8 for the DHS side, that's why we took a particular
9 look to see what we could do address an issue that
10 built up over many years.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Appreciate
12 that.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
14 you, Council Member. We will now hear from Council
15 Member Lander followed by Council Member Salamanca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thanks to the
17 Chairs. Steve, good to see you. I guess I'm going
18 to follow up on the contracting just briefly, because
19 I know you've as part of this broad issue spoken to
20 the work on payment delays as well, but my local
21 homeless services provider insists that they are
22 still owed millions of dollars, like to the point
23 where the interest costs on their line of credit that
24 they have to front what the City owes them is
25 starting to tick into significant dollars. So, I'm

2 open to the possibility that the system is improving,
3 and it's just a problem with them. So, if we could
4 follow up offline, but like it reached a point where
5 they had to come to me and say this is a real dollars
6 and cents problem.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to talk to you
8 about them, but just again, since it is a public
9 hearing, I want to say that of the 17 contracts there
10 are only 10 out of 321 that are still outstanding.
11 Of the 16 contracts there are three out of 318 that
12 are still outstanding, and then there are 41
13 amendments that are outstanding out of 311. So,
14 could they be one of them? It's quite possible, but
15 this is against the background of 950 contract
16 transactions that we've basically done in a years'
17 time. I'd be happy to address--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing]
19 Well, let's follow up--

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think I know what
21 the provider is.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: offline, because
23 if, you know, if this is-- you know, I appreciate
24 that you came ready to talk about the progress you're
25 making. I know you care about this issue, you know,

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2 and when your local provider comes and says we're
3 owed millions of dollars, it's hard not-- so let's
4 follow up and make sure that they get into the group
5 of people that are set and not the group of people--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Happy
7 to do that. You're my Council Member, and your
8 providers are great providers. So we'll figure out
9 which one it is, and we'll--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Alright. I'm not
11 going to make a question of this because I've been
12 back and forth on this issue, and in the prior two
13 terms as well, and you just have followed the same.
14 But the,-- I don't know what else to call it other
15 than the game of under-budgeting. We should stop
16 doing it, and this is our budget hearing, and I'm
17 going to stay we should stop doing it. Yes, we have
18 the right to shelter. Yes, you will add money to the
19 budget, but the prevention we've been doing it since
20 the Bloomberg Administration that we're going to
21 dramatically reduce the budget, we shouldn't be doing
22 budget gimmicks in our homelessness budgeting. So,
23 I've said it every year for the last eight. I'm
24 going to say it again. I really don't want an answer
25

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2 to it. We should stop doing it. What I want to ask
3 about--

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Would
5 you let me answer?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I really-- what I
7 want to ask about is about a more proactive piece of
8 work. You know, the Mayor said recently in public
9 when asked that like every neighborhood under the new
10 "Turning the Tide" report that Community Board Six
11 broadly, I mean Park Slope since that's where he
12 lives, it's what people have usually asked him about,
13 is going to see more shelter capacity, and so we've
14 started a dialogue with DHS about how to more
15 proactively plan to do our fair share, and I'm pleased
16 that most members of our Community Board and people
17 in our community seem open to it. And honestly,
18 regardless of whether it's people from Park Slope or
19 Community Board Six, that's mostly who's in the Park
20 Slope Women's shelter, but I think people feel that's
21 part of our responsibility and we are open to working
22 with DHS to find the space for that additional
23 capacity in our neighborhood. I guess I want to ask
24 a little about planning or the modest funding
25 necessary to do that. That's a little different from

2 you guys finding a place and then bringing it to the
3 community, and I think it's something we have to
4 figure out together. So, we are eager to do our part
5 in trying to be more collaborative and proactive in
6 planning as we move forward in turning the tide, and
7 I wonder, you know, what the agency is thinking about
8 how to do that as much as possible.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: First of all, let me
10 thank you for your leadership and the work with the
11 Community Board that is in dialogue with us about how
12 we can address homelessness in that particular
13 Community Board in that area. There's been a lot of
14 focus in the public discourse about that not being
15 the case, but actually for many of your colleagues,
16 some here, some not here today. I have found during
17 the time that DHS was added to the portfolio that
18 elected officials are very interested in doing
19 exactly what you're doing in your district, and we've
20 had success over the last year in opening shelters
21 and opening shelters among the first five because
22 there's been great leadership and working through the
23 concept that we want to give the opportunity for
24 people to be close to their communities, and we want
25 to close things like in your district there's a

2 hotel. We want to close it, and when we close it, we
3 need to replace capacity, and I really appreciate
4 many of the members of the Council that have been
5 extremely helpful in moving forward with this.
6 You're raising an interesting question about how to
7 support those efforts on a local level. I'm very
8 interested in talking to you about doing that. And
9 although you said that I couldn't answer the other
10 question, I just want to say, one thing about the
11 "Turning the Tide" plan that is a huge departure from
12 prior plans, it really is a truth-telling, bottom
13 line saying we expect given the drivers of
14 homelessness to have reduction. That is something
15 that we think is achievable, and therefore that will
16 create the kind of stability between the Council and
17 the Administration that I think you're appropriately
18 looking for and budgeting that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I agree,
20 "Turning the Tide" is a truth-telling document, and
21 it doesn't say what we wish was that we could
22 dramatically reduce it much quicker. So--

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] It says
24 what we can do, and we will achieve it.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: The budget should
3 be a truth-telling document as well, and I fear in
4 this instance it is not. I don't-- if I could just
5 ask about Safe Haven beds. In my district we've--
6 the street homeless man right in front of my district
7 office, and we've worked well with the outreach team,
8 and the outreach team is responsive and talks-- knows
9 him by name and works with us about it, but what I've
10 been told is there's not a Safe Haven bed available
11 for him, and it's been weeks now. So, do we not have
12 enough Safe Haven beds?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're adding Safe
14 Haven beds on an ongoing basis. Those Safe Haven
15 beds will help us bring people in. We'll certainly
16 follow up with you, and I believe the provider, to
17 see what the issue is with that particular client to
18 find a place to put him. There are new beds we've
19 opened in Brooklyn, and there are beds that we're
20 opening in other boroughs, and if this particular
21 individual we could bring in because of a-- but for
22 the lack of a bed, we will remedy that right away.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very
24 much. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
3 you, Council Member. Council Member Salamanca?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.

5 Council Member Lander, the homeless men that are in
6 the Safe Haven, they're probably going to end up in
7 my council district, because I'm having an issue with
8 Safe Haven that they're trying to open up in my
9 district.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Well, we're
11 looking for one in Brooklyn. So, that's all I--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: [interposing]
13 Commissioner, how are you? Commissioner, I have my
14 question. I have few questions. Wanted to talk, ask
15 a few questions about overburdened and oversaturated
16 communities. Do you agree that there are
17 overburdened and oversaturated districts that have
18 more than their fair share of homeless shelters?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I certainly agree
20 that as a result of the way this system is built up
21 over the years, and the opening of clusters and
22 commercial hotels, that there's a mismatch often
23 between need and where people are housed. That's
24 what the underlying issue in "Turning the Tide" is,
25 which is that we want to have people connected to

2 their communities close to home. In your district,
3 for example, there's 65 sites and 36 of them are
4 clusters, and three of them are commercial hotels.
5 The plan is going to call for or will enable us to
6 close all of those 39 facilities. I agree with you
7 going back to when you were a district manager, I
8 think it was, and the growth of these cluster sites
9 over 17 years in your district presented problems.
10 But on the other hand, as we implement the plan,
11 there's a real need for us to close things and open
12 things, and the timing can't always be the same.
13 It's even--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: [interposing]
15 I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Commissioner, I have five
16 minutes, and--

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Oh, I'm
18 sorry.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I want to get
20 my questions.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, I'm sorry.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Does DHS have a
23 meter system where a flag comes up when they're
24 saying hey, this certain community has more than its
25

2 fair share of shelters in their district. Is there a
3 system to identify that?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, as the plan
5 specifies and we issue fair shares on facilities as
6 we're opening them, as the plan specifies we'll have
7 equitable siting when we get to the end of the five
8 years, but in order to close places we have to open
9 things.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yes. So,
11 Commissioner, and I'm happy you-- you may have some
12 updated numbers. The numbers that I have in my
13 Council district, that I have 484 units of cluster
14 sits, which equals out to 1,700 individuals, and I
15 have 25 shelters, three commercial hotels, one adult
16 family hotel, five family hotels, one adult family
17 Tier II, seven family Tier II's, five adult shelters,
18 one late arrival, and two Safe Havens. And again,
19 you're trying to open up your third Safe Haven in my
20 Council District. Now, I sent a letter to the Mayor
21 on May 8th, and I did CC you. I have not gotten a
22 response back from your office or the Mayor's Office
23 but in my letter I'm pointing out, this Safe Haven
24 that your agency and this Administration wants to
25 open up is in Community Board Six, and the numbers

2 that I just got from actually your agency, in
3 Community Board Six they're housing 1,222 individuals
4 and yet, only 705 are from that community. In
5 Community Board Three, they're housing 1,142
6 individuals and only 840 are from that community.
7 So, in those two Community Boards alone, we're over
8 capacity of 819 individuals that do not live-- leave--
9 - lives in these neighborhoods. Commissioner, can
10 you explain that to me? I see that as an
11 overburdened community.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I said, there are
13 65 sites in your Council District, and we're closing
14 39 of them, and that is--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: [interposing]
16 But Commissioner, you're closing 39, yet your office
17 and this Administration has not contacted my office
18 to sit down and explain to us what the plan is. So,
19 there is no communication coming back and forth from
20 your office.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I know there was a
22 briefing for the Council on the cluster closure plan.
23 If we haven't been responsive, I'd be happy to sit
24 down with you and give you a fuller briefing.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Once again,
3 and Madam Chair and Mr. Chairman, there's an issue
4 here with oversaturated communities, and mine is one
5 of them, and this Administration has failed to see
6 that, and what they're doing is they're planning on
7 opening up more shelters in my Council District, and
8 I am totally opposed to it. I understand there's a
9 need for shelters. I understand that we want to keep
10 our families in their communities, and we want to
11 keep our children near their schools to see their
12 friends, and to see their healthcare providers, but
13 when you're bringing in other families from outside
14 other communities, I need to speak up, and that's
15 what I'm doing. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate your
17 comment. The intent of the plan is to address
18 exactly the problem you're describing which has built
19 up for many years. We're going to close a lot of
20 places in the district so that we can have a better
21 match between where people came from and the ability
22 to keep them close to where they came from.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So,
24 Commissioner, as a follow-up to Council Member
25 Salamanca's point, let's schedule a meeting before--

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2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Happy
3 to do that.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: our
5 adoption of this budget.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to do that.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: With his
8 team, his staff, whoever you need in the meeting.
9 We'll provide finance support if you need from the
10 Finance Division. So, we'd like to schedule this
11 before adoption.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to do that.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
14 Council Member Cornegy?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you,
16 Chairs. Commissioner, how are you?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good. How are you
18 doing today?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, in keeping
20 with the theme of communication, I'll start with I
21 just-- I'd love to be an advocate on behalf of the
22 Administration's plan, but it's difficult for me to
23 do when there's no real coordinated effort to do
24 that. I am probably the greatest credible messenger
25 on behalf of the Administration in my district alone,

2 and the lack of coordination is a little disturbing
3 to me. I'd like to talk about the fiscal impact of
4 the proposed shelters. I didn't hear the number of
5 cost for the proposed shelters from you, but I can
6 assure you that it's four times the amount.

7 Statistically, it's four times the amount of long-
8 term sustainable affordable housing. It is four
9 times the amount to temporarily house an individuals
10 and/or family as opposed to long-term sustainable
11 housing. People like myself who are elected with the
12 idea that we would attempt at the very least to be
13 good fiscal stewards, it's difficult for me to
14 support a plan that does that. So, I'd like for you
15 to explain the number cost-wise or the fiscal impact
16 of the proposed expansion of shelters and explain at
17 this point how we can afford to spend four times as
18 much on short term proposal when we should be
19 spending more time on long-term affordable housing
20 plan.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, again, thank you
22 for the good town hall that we had with the Mayor in
23 your district where many of these issues came up in
24 March, and the funding for the 90 shelters is out of
25 the current expense budget that we are using to

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2 provide shelter right now based upon our projections.

3 We are shrinking the number of locations by 45
4 percent, closing 360 locations where clusters and
5 hotels have been in use, including in your district.

6 Those will be closed, and in various district were
7 seeing net reductions in beds, including in the
8 Community Board with Bergen Street shelter for Senior
9 Citizens is proposed.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I want to just
11 make the point that I didn't bring up Bergen, you
12 did, and I guess we'll address that at some point
13 before this conversation is over.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. The end
15 result of this is that we'll have fewer locations and
16 that we will eliminate the use of commercial hotels
17 that have been used in the City going back to Lindsey
18 over periods of time. And so the 90 new facilities is
19 a smaller number as against the 360 that are going to
20 be eliminated, and so the dollars will be expense
21 budget dollars. In terms of the differences between
22 cost of permanent housing and the cost for shelter,
23 there are a whole range of costs that go into develop
24 permanent housing, construction, rehabilitation
25 costs, and there's also funding streams. The

2 provision of shelter is a requirement of our- by
3 court order in New York City, and the investment was
4 made in preventing people from becoming homeless is
5 what is enabling us to stabilize the numbers of
6 people in shelter, and ultimately as I said to
7 Council Member Lander, to begin for the first time in
8 a decade to reduce the numbers of people in shelter.
9 And so the investments, for example, in the legal
10 services program to provide an attorney for everyone
11 in court through the Universal Access to Counsel Plan
12 is having an impact. Evictions are down 24 percent
13 in the City. That's a meaningful investment. The
14 investment in rent arears, 161,000 households we've
15 paid rent arears to keep them from being evicted.
16 That's an important investment. So, the fact that on
17 any one night it might may be more costly for shelter
18 is reflective of what I said at the beginning of the
19 testimony which is that there's a gap between the
20 numbers of units that are needed and the numbers of
21 people who need them, and in the meantime you have
22 the result that people are seeking shelter every
23 night, and so we have to have a place to house them.
24 for a number of decades various people sat in my
25 position, said that this was going to be an

2 emergency, it'll be over, so it's' okay that we
3 rented apartments in the 17-year-old cluster program,
4 even though that wasn't a good program, or it's going
5 to be an emergency so it's going to be over with, so
6 therefore it's okay to rent hotel rooms which has
7 gone on for a number of decades off and on. The plan
8 is one that says the reality is that there are people
9 that will become homeless in the City and we have to
10 treat them decently and provide decent shelter to
11 them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So, does the
13 reduction in facilities represent a reduction in bed
14 numbers because my district is feeling as though it's
15 oversaturated, and I serve a district that really is
16 at the crux having-- being the epicenter of
17 gentrification right now is finding only two molds of
18 living, either in a shelter for long-term residents
19 or in overpriced housing, and that's-- you know, if I
20 continue, if I sit idly by and continue in that vein,
21 it's going to create a larger chasm for the members
22 of my community. So I'm very concerned with does
23 what you're proposing as a reduction in facilities--

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] There's
25 a--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: present a
3 reduction in bed numbers?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. Even with
5 the opening of that particular shelter that we talked
6 about and the opening of another facility elsewhere
7 in that community district, there's a net reduction
8 of a hundred beds in the community.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And just for the
10 record, you know that the residents in close
11 proximity to the Bergen Avenue facility are
12 vehemently against having it there. They're not a
13 nimby community. They're an anti-oversaturation
14 community that I represent. So I just want for the
15 record to say that and I support that idea that we're
16 not bearing the burden for the entire city during
17 this very serious homelessness crisis.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood, and
19 again, in that particular location, responsive to the
20 reforms that we announced a year ago, we intend to
21 have a specialized shelter for men who are 62 years
22 or older. There are men right now in Brooklyn who
23 would very much like to be housed there who are 62
24 years old or one of-- one of the outcomes of the
25 reforms we announced a year ago was that senior

2 citizens need to have a special focus and this is the
3 facility that will enable us to do that, much the
4 same way that the LGBTQI shelter in Council Member
5 Torres' district is enabling us to focus on the
6 particular needs of youth which was another priority
7 that came out of the reforms announced a year ago.
8 But again, I appreciate working with you, and I know
9 we'll continue to work together.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And I just want
11 to end by saying that I am not at all callus about
12 the challenges that are presented by this current
13 crisis and the work trying to be done to do it. I
14 just want to make sure that I can be a stabilizing
15 voice as a community that's facing this in a manner
16 that's a little bit unprecedented. So, this is not a
17 disparaging conversation. This is wanting to be part
18 of the conversation, and as someone who could provide
19 a good sound voice, I come from that industry prior
20 to being elected, and I think that I could probably
21 be helpful in the dissemination of information at
22 least, or in the plan for my community and for the
23 City in general. So, thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I appreciate that. I
25 know you've been very supportive of our employment

2 programs for homeless adults run by the Doe fund, so

3 I appreciate your offer, and I'm going to continue to
4 take you up on it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
8 you, Council Member. We're going to-- the Chairs are
9 going to ask you some follow-up questions, but
10 because of time we're also going to be sending you
11 additional questions that we won't be able to ask
12 here today. I wanted to focus in on just kind of a
13 brief overview on the legal defense for immigrants or
14 Action-- or the funding for ActionNYC, and
15 Commissioner Agarwal spoke about this, but as you
16 know, it's 18.1 million in Fiscal 2018. Our issue
17 from the finance perspective is it's lumped in these
18 very weird codes that don't correlate necessarily
19 what the funding is for. an example of that is there
20 are seven new positions that are slotted by the
21 Administration at 616,000 for new staff for the
22 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, but it's all
23 under the Municipal ID Administration, and the
24 Commissioner testified that has nothing to do with
25 Muni ID's, those positions.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sure we can sort
3 out whatever issues there are there. I think as you
4 know, and we appreciate the support, HRA is the
5 Administrator for the IDNYC program and we also
6 provide support for MOIA's operations in various
7 areas, and we can sort out with you what exactly
8 these MOIA positions are, and if they're in the wrong
9 budget code we can certainly work that through with
10 you. I appreciate the concerns you have--

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
12 [interposing] Right.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: about transparency.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well,
15 it's not only that they're in the wrong budget code,
16 but it seems like nobody can tell me what the
17 positions are for, which is the bigger question. So
18 that's something that we're going to need to follow
19 up on.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, we will follow
21 up with you on that.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And then
23 in the Executive Budget, there's approximately 17.3
24 million which falls under the budget name Anti-
25 Eviction Services and object name Homeless Family

2 Services. How did HRA and OMB decide to place this
3 amount under the specific budget name? Were there
4 any conversations around whether you just need a
5 whole new U of A so that we can-- and this was for
6 the legal defense for immigrants? So this is the
7 NYIFUP funding was under the code Anti-Eviction
8 Services.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that this
10 has come up in I think some other hearings we've had
11 about the transition of having multiple different
12 legal services programs under one roof and how best
13 to express them. I think we did and we certainly can
14 again try to give a functional briefing-- I'm sorry,
15 a briefing on the functional budget codes that might
16 apply here. Overall, however, there are two
17 different legal services initiatives that are
18 ongoing. There's the Access to Counsel, Universal
19 Access to Counsel initiative, which is 15.1 million,
20 and approximately 18 million for various immigration
21 legal services initiatives, and if there's a lack of
22 clarity in how we've used the codes we can certainly
23 do a briefing so that if by Adopted it's clear--

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
25 [interposing] Right.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: what's in which,
3 which--

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
5 [interposing] So we're going to follow up because
6 what we're asking for is a U of A or an object name
7 or something that we can follow the significant
8 increase that is kind of what-- well, it is what
9 MOIA's doing, but because you said you're responsible
10 for their portion of the budget, really is just kind
11 of lumped in, I believe, with other things, and it
12 may have been in the spirit of haste, but not
13 necessarily that you're trying to avoid anything.
14 But it's very difficult for us to follow the money in
15 the way that we should be able to.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. As I said,
17 we'll be happy to do a briefing on this topic and
18 determine what relates to functionality, what relates
19 to budget codes, and what might relate to going
20 forward to greater clarity so you can see and we can
21 see what the issues are.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Great.
23 And in January General Welfare hearing, you testified
24 that allowing youth living in runaway and homeless
25 youth shelters to utilize LINC was in the works and

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2 we would receive updated information at the budget
3 hearing. When will homeless youth in runaway
4 homeless youth system be able to apply for LINC
5 vouchers?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We expect that the
7 rule changes will be made during the summer. Again,
8 we're just awaiting the final approval of the FEPS
9 settlement and that that will affect when we can
10 announce the streamlining.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, are
12 you--

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Which
14 will include the issue you asked me about.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right
16 that we had before. Okay. Now, I wanted to-- I have
17 two questions, and then we'll pass it over to the
18 Chair. This is in the expansion of DV shelters and
19 legal representation again for immigrants.

20 Commissioner, in Fiscal 2016, the Council launched a
21 new initiative that provides support for victims of
22 human trafficking. Funded at 750,000, the initiative
23 funds seven community-based organizations to provide
24 services to victims in the City's five Human
25 Trafficking Courts. Court servicers-- services

2 include counseling, education, program referral to
3 legal representation. There are a large number of
4 foreign-born defendants who pass through the courts
5 each month, many who are eligible for T-Non-Immigrant
6 status and other forms of immigration relief.
7 Through your Immigrant Legal Services expansion, has
8 your office given any thought to funding legal
9 services organizations to provide consultation or
10 full representation to these individuals?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Some of those
12 services are already covered in programs; the T-
13 Visas, the U-Visas and so forth are covered in our
14 vision of moving forward, but I certainly want to
15 take into consideration your question and follow up
16 with you, but those visas that are typically
17 available to someone without sort of horrific
18 experience are the kinds of services that we do fund
19 providers to deliver to clients through the IOI
20 program, and there will be expansion of all of these
21 initiatives as part of the additional investment and
22 the kinds of cases you're describing are important
23 ones we want to consider.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right,
25 and I think this is just very sensitive, and having

2 also been one of the supporters of IOI when it was
3 the Council, IOI was for one thing and that's why we
4 made the Human Trafficking Initiative very separate,
5 very niche, because it had different challenges, and
6 it-- you know, IOI funding doesn't necessarily mean
7 that-- at least from the Council's perspective at the
8 time had the component of providing that support
9 within the courts. And according to Judge Serita
10 [sp?] from the Queens Human Trafficking Court,
11 because as you may know, Queens is like the epicenter
12 of a lot of human trafficking. Unfortunately, my
13 district is very much-- the Roosevelt Avenue corridor
14 has been known for years as, you know, the place
15 where we see a lot of human trafficking. And
16 Sanctuary for Families has provided consultation for
17 more than 300 individuals, but there is still an
18 unmet need, and these are some of the providers that
19 we've been working for, and while there's been a lot
20 of support for U-Visas, the T-Visas are the ones that
21 we haven't seen necessarily a lot of engagement on.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll certainly take
23 that into consideration. I understand the question.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those organizations
3 do great work. We also spoke with the judge from the
4 park in Queens along with Assembly Member Hevesi
5 about ways in which we might be able to connect
6 clients seen in the court to services that we have.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,
8 great. DV, Commissioner Banks, in your testimony for
9 Fiscal 2018's Preliminary Budget, you indicated that
10 there was a 17 million dollar increase in 2018
11 compared to 2017 for the full expansion of domestic
12 violence shelters, which include 300 emergency beds
13 and 400 Tier II units. HRA has capacity for more
14 than 2,200 emergency DV shelter beds. Are the DV
15 shelter beds open to victims of human trafficking?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The shelter, those
17 shelter beds are governed by state statute that are
18 focused on intimate partner violence. This is
19 exactly the very question that the judge was asking
20 us about. They are-- we open emergency beds and we
21 open Tier II shelters under a state regulatory
22 regimen, and that was certainly a conversation we had
23 with Assembly Member Hevesi about what other things
24 could be done. We'd be happy to work with you to try
25 to address that.

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2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: If we can
3 work together. You know, prior to being Finance
4 Chair I was Chair of the Women's Issues Committee,
5 and--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I
7 recall.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: this was a
9 very, very important--

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]
11 Understood.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: issue for
13 this Council and to-- you know, we want to make sure--
14 -

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]
16 Understood.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: that the
18 best way to get women out of their situation is often
19 by just providing shelter and a safe space and a safe
20 haven, and it's kind of parallel to what DV victims
21 go through where they need to be kind of taken away
22 from their pimp or, you know, whoever is-- you know,
23 you want to take them completely out of the
24 environment. Unfortunately, very much like so DV
25

2 victims. So we will follow up. Thank you. And now
3 we will hear from Chair Levin.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you very
5 much, Chair Ferreras-Copeland. Commissioner, just a
6 few points and questions, and then I'll let you guys
7 go. First, following up on Council Member
8 Grodenchik's questions around EFAP. You know, we
9 worked with you guys last year on a historic increase
10 in the emergency food budget. We just want to make
11 clear that, you know, what we're calling for this
12 year is 22 million dollars that is a relatively small
13 amount of funding when you consider the vast need,
14 the challenges that we face from a hostile
15 Administration in Washington. There's been news
16 reports around mixed immigration status families
17 opting out of EFAP because they're afraid of an ICE
18 crackdown, and they don't really want to get involved
19 with a federal program despite the fact that they,
20 you know, have been receiving assurance both from the
21 City and us, and they, you know, the State has no
22 mechanism to tip off ICE, but people are worried, and
23 EFAP is our emergency food programs, our pantries,
24 our church-based pantries. Those are all-- that's
25 the backstop that we have when it comes to hunger in

2 New York City, and there's just no reason in the
3 world why in a budget of 84.9 billion dollars we
4 can't allocate 22 million dollars which is, you know,
5 that's about a quarter of one-thousandth of the
6 budget to do what's right by these families.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I said, we will--
8 and as OMB Budget Director said in-- Dean Fuleihan
9 said in his hearing, we're going to work with you as
10 we did last year to address what the need is.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay. So,
12 let's, you know, keep in very close contact, and
13 we'll be working with the provider community over the
14 coming weeks. But, you know, again, 22 million
15 dollars, one four-thousandth of the budget, it's
16 doable. Fair Fares, are you familiar with the
17 concept and the movement going on right now for
18 providing subsidy for families living under the
19 poverty line for their transportation costs?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I have read about it.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And does the
22 Administration have an opinion on it? Do you see it
23 as part of, you know, factoring into your mission at
24 HRA to provide essential support to families in need?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that, you
3 know, there's certainly been public comments made by
4 the Mayor and the Budget Director on these issues.
5 They really relate to larger issues about the MTA and
6 the cost of the fare, and I think as you know, about
7 three hours in, the scope of what we're currently
8 doing is very broad.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yep.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If people think we
11 should do more on any topic, I'm always happy to hear
12 that, but this is one I think in which there's been
13 an administration position that's been articulated.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There's a few more
15 questions here. I'm going to jump around here
16 because these are just--

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] That's
18 okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: for both agencies.
20 The new-- this is around the expanding shelter
21 capacity. The new plan mentions opening 20 new
22 shelters in 2017 and 18, bringing it to a total of 40
23 by 2018 out of the 90. For the benefit of this
24 committee, can you share with us the borough and
25

2 capacity of the new shelters that are planned, these
3 40 shelters that are planned in 17 and 18?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean, shelter, we
5 have five proposals that we have approved for
6 opening, and we've announced them publicly and varies
7 [sic] of them are already up and running. Three of
8 them are up and running, and others are in the
9 process of being run. The new shelters beyond those
10 first five come to us via proposals that are made by
11 community groups, or as Council Member Lander
12 described, communities saying they're interested in a
13 facility in a particular area. So, as we receive
14 proposals we review them. We're reviewing them for
15 consistency with the plan to address needs that we've
16 got citywide. As you heard my answer to certain
17 questions that are sked by different Council Members,
18 in order to close things, we have to open things.
19 So, we will continue to evaluate new proposals as
20 they come in, and when we have announcements on more
21 facilities we'll make them, but that's based upon
22 proposals that have been made to us by other not-for-
23 profits or communities that may have identified a
24 particular site.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but do you have
3 a-- do you have a sense of exactly how the borough
4 breakdown will go?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think as you
6 can see, we've provided to the Council, there's a
7 breakdown of where people come from, and we want to
8 realign that to where we have shelters. Staten
9 Island, for example, is a place where we need more
10 facilities to deal with housing Staten Islanders.
11 Other communities such as the conversations that I
12 had with Council Member Gibson and Council Member
13 Salamanca, we're closing things down and replacing
14 them with a smaller number with less capacity. So,
15 each district has its own-- in each borough has its
16 own particular needs.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: As this goes forward,
18 I mean, it would be helpful for us to know
19 specifically, just in terms of like where our targets
20 are and how we're tracking meeting those targets
21 borough by borough or community district by community
22 district.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's also important
24 to remember there are a couple of things happening at
25

2 the same time. Seventy percent of the clusters are
3 in the Bronx.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So we have to-- as
6 part of closing the clusters, we have to proceed to
7 close them, and some of those facilities will need to
8 be replaced with other facilities, smaller number of
9 facilities, where Queens has 50 percent of the
10 commercial hotels.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And as we close
13 them, some of them will need to be replaced, and
14 others may not depending on what the needs are for
15 particular parts of the borough.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. We're
17 perfectly understanding of the fact that new capacity
18 is going to be replacing old capacity, and I
19 appreciate that. But again, it would be helpful to--
20 and I, you know, I can understand maybe some
21 trepidation on the part of the Administration saying
22 we're going to open, you know, 25 new shelters in
23 Queens, and maybe creating some hysteria in Queens,
24 but the context has to be that yes, but we are then
25 getting out of X number of hotel units. I think

2 that, you know, in the interest of transparency that
3 would be, I think, appropriate to share with this
4 committee.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Look, again, the
6 stated goal of the plan in multiple places in the
7 plan is to have over the life of the plan more
8 equitable locations of facilities across all five
9 boroughs, and within the boroughs, so that families
10 and individuals have an opportunity to be as close to
11 home as possible to get back on their feet more
12 quickly.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: When there's major
14 repair work going to-- jumping around to the-- major
15 focus of DHS' Capital Commitment Plan is maintenance
16 and expansion of transitional housing. So, the FY18
17 Budget Capital Commitment Plan reflects approximately
18 46.3 million dollars to renovate the 30th Street
19 men's shelter, also known as Bellevue, but in a
20 larger sense when DHS does large major repair work,
21 how does DHS manage that capacity if they have to
22 bring new units online? Are we-- right now,
23 currently, do we have to open up hotel units in order
24 to do that major repair work?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Not for the--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing]

3 [inaudible]

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Not for the projects
5 that are--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Not for
7 Bellevue.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: that are specified,
9 but again, to come back to what we spoke about
10 earlier in the hearing, the 30 sites some of which
11 date back to the Koch Shelter Plan that need
12 renovations and could provide additional capacity for
13 either permanent or temporary housing on those sites,
14 that will require swing space, and as specified in
15 the plan, we will need to be opening next year
16 additional shelters that could be used as swing
17 space. Ultimately, those shelters will be able to be
18 used as operating shelters, but their first call will
19 be to enable us to relocate families or individuals
20 from locations that are going to be renovated. So,
21 the plan has some facilities that are currently in
22 operation that will just need capital repairs, and
23 we'll be able to do those with people in place for
24 the most part, and then a very conscious focus on
25

2 renovating and expanding some existing sites that
3 will require swing space.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. With- in new
5 funding this year, shelter maintenance and repair for
6 17 is 4.2 increasing to 7 in Fiscal 18 in new funding
7 for shelter maintenance and repair. That's not--
8 that's in new-- that's new need.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's expense.
10 You're talking about expense?

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Expense, well, yes,
12 and that's the question. So why-- if those-- why--
13 if those repairs are happening in city-owned
14 buildings, why is that in the expense budget and not
15 in the capital budget?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are for
17 providers to make repairs within their buildings, and
18 remembering that one of the problems that got us to
19 the situation that required us to clear 14,000
20 violations last year in the shelters that we're
21 staying in exclusive of the clusters is the lack of
22 investment and maintenance. So, part of the 200
23 million dollar investment and the not-for-profit
24 sector is to provide available funds for maintenance
25 of shelters whether city-owned or not. So your

2 point, which I do take, is wait a minute, aren't you
3 repairing the city-owned shelters? Those are capital
4 expenditures? But then issues arise during the
5 course of the year in which repairs need to be made
6 to deal with the normal wear and tear, and some of
7 the funding relates to staff that we have to make
8 some of those repairs in terms of DHS staff.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Jumping over to
10 children in shelter. So, childcare services of city
11 shelters aren't subject to the same health and safety
12 regulations that govern childcare facilities outside
13 of shelters. So, there's a Comptroller report that
14 uncovered serious safety security and health issues
15 at shelters for families with children. How is DHS
16 working with DOHMH to address those issues, and would
17 the Administration support changes to Article 47 of
18 the City Health Code related to inspections of
19 daycare facilities to include the childcare centers
20 in the City shelters?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. One of the
22 challenges here is that by state regulation, state
23 regulation provides for different kinds of access to
24 childcare. One kind of state-- one kind of child
25 care that state regulation specifies is called Drop-

2 off Childcare to enable families with children to
3 look for housing that may be episodic use of
4 childcare as opposed to ongoing use of childcare.
5 The landscape has changed since that regulation was
6 issued in the 1980's. There's UPK now. There's the
7 plan for three year olds. There is within model
8 budgets that we're developing, different providers
9 have raised issues with respect to childcare. Our
10 first step was to have the Department of Health go
11 out and look at various sites and a number of them
12 needed to be remediated and couldn't be used anymore,
13 and we're continuing to work with the Department of
14 Health about what will make sense going forward with
15 a new landscape that we've got, including about 40
16 percent of those 90 new sites that will enable us to
17 close 360 locations, changes the kinds of facilities
18 people are going to be in and opens up new
19 opportunities for addressing childcare. So the
20 landscape is changing. It's an important issue, and
21 we're going to continue to focus on it with the
22 Department of Health.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sorry, I said I was
24 going to jump around. So, jumping back to the EFAP
25 program, would you be supportive of including

2 performance indicators for the EFAP program in the
3 MMR? When we talk about EFAP there seems to be--
4 you know, often times there's a, you know, some type
5 of discord in terms of, you know, where the-- how
6 much-- what the need might be at any given time as it
7 relates to capacity. So, you know, what would be
8 helpful is maybe some clear performance indicators
9 that are then made public and can be accessed by us
10 here at the Council.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean, we'll take a
12 look at that. Obvious-- you know, one issue is the
13 issue that the Council and the Administration
14 addressed last year which is trying to address
15 capacity needs.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: and I don't mean
18 capacity meaning demand; I mean capacity meaning the
19 ability to provide, to store food for example and
20 some of the issues that I know the Council's been
21 concerned about we jointly addressed last year in the
22 allocation of dollars. So, addressing some of those
23 issues might enable us to look at the issue you're
24 talking about. We'll look at it and we'll have
25 conversation.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah not everything
3 necessarily fits into a performance indicator, you
4 know, when you're talking about complex issues, but
5 it would be helpful, I think, for us, you know, as we
6 work through the significant number of issues that we
7 work with your agencies on, that we don't lose sight
8 of this and to have some data to work off in the MMR
9 would be helpful.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We'll see what if
11 anything is feasible.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then my last
13 question, and then we'll turn it over to Council
14 Member Miller who has joined us, can you give us a
15 quick update on the expansion of the HomeBase
16 program, the number of providers when you-- announced
17 the new homeless plan was supposed to be jumping from
18 11 to 16. Has that happened yet?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're right in the
20 middle of the procurement process for that. So,
21 there is the plan of increasing the number of
22 providers and also increasing the funding for
23 services with additional 16 million dollars we're
24 repurposing from other areas of our budget to give
25 the expansion that we think it needed for aftercare

2 services in particular, but we would expect to have
3 the procurement completed very soon in order to move
4 forward with that.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And my last thing
6 that I want to say is you mentioned model budget with
7 shelter providers and social service providers within
8 the shelter system. One area that we would like to
9 see more clarity on and we want to work with you on
10 is identifying the range of services in various
11 shelter capacities and various shelter modes
12 throughout the system and how it's applied and
13 distributed, you know, throughout the system. so,
14 wanted to get on a more granular level, information
15 around what type of social services are provided for
16 the hotel out by LaGuardia Airport or JFK Airport and
17 how that compares to the level of social services
18 provided in a Tier II shelter, you know, with an
19 organization such as Henry Street Settlement House
20 that has a tremendous amount of wrap-around services
21 and a wide range of other types of services. You
22 know, the-- that's something that I think we need to
23 focus on because there are children that spend and
24 families that spend a year and a half or two years in
25 the shelter system, living out of a hotel without a

2 kitchen, you know, without the basic, you know, a lot
3 of the basic necessities that we all take for
4 granted. We really do. We take our, you know, these
5 aspects of our lives, you know, for granted every
6 single day to have, you know, a working kitchen, you
7 know, multiple rooms, not doubled up, and so you
8 know, it would be really helpful to know as this
9 process moves forward how these-- how very
10 specifically how the range of social services matches
11 up.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that the
13 model budget process will be helpful in doing what
14 you're asking. I think also the procurement that
15 we've done for services in hotels during the phase-
16 out period, even though they're being phase out. We
17 want to control cost and address service needs. So,
18 I think those processes will be helpful to do what
19 you're asking us to do.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
21 Commissioner, and I'll turn it over to Council Member
22 Miller for last round of questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Chair
24 Levin, and good afternoon, Commissioner, you and your
25 team. Thank you for being here. So, I want to-- I'm

2 sure it's been discussed in great detail, but I
3 wanted to specifically first talk about the reorg of
4 the shelter system, that that means. I was glad to
5 hear you say that-- not paraphrasing, but it's not
6 one-size-fits-all, and that it would be specific to
7 the needs of the community. With that being said,
8 how do we address the communities such as the Jamaica
9 area, the Community Boards 12 and 13, 14, and the
10 area where they have a high density of beds currently
11 and probably not the majority of the residents are
12 probably not from those communities? What would be
13 the approach that we would be taking there if in fact
14 we were looking to get people-- put people where they
15 come from?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I think
17 there's a couple of aspects that will address
18 concerns that you and I have talked about
19 periodically. One is that we'll be closing all of
20 the commercial hotels during the life of the plan.
21 So we will not be operating commercial hotels. There
22 have been hotels used, commercial hotels used going
23 back to Lindsey. This plan eliminates that. We-- in
24 some of those areas there are no shelter facilities
25 at all, and there's going to be a need for shelter

2 facilities to address the clients that come from that
3 general area of Queens. There will also be exactly I
4 think what you're asking me, which is there are other
5 places where clients need to be housed, and you know,
6 the Mayor's been clear, as have I, that we don't have
7 enough shelter space in Staten Island, for example,
8 and we're going to need to address that. And as the
9 plan proceeds, we'll continue to do that. There are
10 facilities, whether they be safe havens or other kind
11 of facilities that we're, you know, opening in
12 different locations. We're just about to open a--
13 proceed with a safe haven at 14th Street and Seventh
14 Avenue in Manhattan, for example, and we will
15 continue to do that in order to deal with the
16 haphazard way the shelter system has built up over 20
17 years.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So--

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] To get
20 at exactly the kind of issues I know you've raised
21 previously.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Obviously, your
23 team, members of the Council have had a lot of
24 conversations, dialogue, and been engaged over the
25 past few years on this, and we've not always agreed,

2 but there has been some good things done. I think
3 that-- I'm not sure whether or not we're reaching
4 target audiences, and I'm not sure whether or not
5 we're getting that information out, because we still
6 suffer from a lot of misinformation about what this
7 system looks like. So, in terms of communication and
8 transparency, I think that would be helpful for
9 everyone. In light of the Washington D.C.'s funding
10 or lack thereof, I'm sure that there's a budget
11 analysis that addresses that as well. Are we seeing
12 that we have to now prioritize services based on the
13 needs? You know, obviously legal services are a big
14 portion of the budget where they weren't in the past.
15 Are we prioritizing that? Are we seeing diminishing
16 services in more traditional areas, childcare, and
17 things of that nature there?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that, you
19 know, as you know, the proposals that are emanating
20 from Washington are proposals, and we work very
21 closely with the two Senators and the Congressional
22 delegation and the Council and the Assembly and the
23 Senate Representatives from New York City and the
24 State to address these issues, and we'll see what the
25 final proposals are. The legal services investment

2 that we've made going from six million dollars in
3 2013 to when we get done with full ramp-up, 155
4 million dollars, was a course that we put in place
5 well before any changes in Washington, because we
6 really have adopted a prevention first strategy in
7 terms of addressing homelessness. So that predates
8 any recent changes, and we're going to continue on
9 that path because we think it makes far more sense to
10 keep people in their homes than to have them lose
11 them and enter shelter.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And finally, in--
13 for the agencies, the organizations that are
14 providing services, for those who are in shelters and
15 other forms of transitional housing,-- and I
16 understand that sometimes that these are emergency
17 situations. Is there-- are the procurement processes
18 for these agencies the same or do you just kind of
19 get to choose folks to service the needs of the
20 residents here.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's all done
22 through the same procurement procedures that we have,
23 and in fact, the opening of shelters, we get sites
24 two different ways, through the procurement process
25 in which proposals are made to us, and again as

2 Council Member Lander described, in which communities
3 who want to be involved and make suggestions to us,
4 and there have been a number of Council Members who
5 have been extremely helpful in the siting process,
6 and we appreciate that partnership. But if an agency
7 wants to open-- I'm going to say this and you-- I
8 don't know--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposing] No,
10 I'm fully--

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] If
12 initially you wanted to open a facility, we would be
13 more than willing to receive such a proposal and
14 evaluated for its consistency with the "Turning the
15 Tide" plan.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, certainly
17 we're seeing that. So, and one of my concerns is of
18 veteran services. I've seen agencies that are
19 responsible for providing those services and they
20 don't really employ veterans that they don't
21 articulate the veteran culture and, you know, I'm not
22 so sure that is the best way to provide those
23 services. And that's just as an example. So, when
24 we are deciding whether through RFP or whatever that
25

2 process is, are we looking for that specialization
3 and providing services for those target audiences?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, I think that we
5 want to see that agencies have experience in
6 providing services. LGBTQI shelter that we just
7 opened is one of the first five shelters in Council
8 Member Torres' district. We were blessed with
9 Project Renewal which has the ability to provide
10 those kinds of services with a deep understanding of
11 the issues, or CORE in Brooklyn which is proposed to
12 open a shelter for senior citizen men over the age of
13 62 from Brooklyn. Tremendous experience in that
14 area. Samaritan Village which is proposing to open a
15 shelter for families with children, a long standing
16 track record. I think that your question really is a
17 very important one for us to keep focusing on which
18 is to make sure that those that provide proposals to
19 us have the track record and the experience in
20 providing those kinds of services.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, because in
22 the-- that's not always the case, and I would hope
23 that in the future that we can do that as well as
24 that there's a component that includes the Community
25

2 Advisory Boards as well so that community can feel
3 like they're being engaged as well.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All shelters that
5 will be opened as a result of the plan to close 360
6 sites and open a small number of 90 locations will
7 have a Community Advisory Board, and that is part of
8 the standard operating procedure of opening new
9 shelters, and that will be part of the ongoing way in
10 which we have community input back and forth.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
12 much.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
14 you, Council Member. Commissioner, we have follow-up
15 questions that both committees will be getting to
16 you. If you can get them to us as soon as possible,
17 because we will be needed them for negotiation
18 purposes. Can I get a commitment from you?

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You have a
20 commitment from me to get back to you answers to
21 questions that I haven't seen yet as quickly as
22 possible.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
24 Excellent. That concludes this portion of today's
25 budget hearing. I want to thank Commissioner Banks

2 for testifying for several hours. We started this
3 morning, and now it's almost two o'clock in the
4 afternoon. Again, a reminder that the public will be
5 invited to testify on Thursday, May 25th, the last
6 day of budget hearings at approximately 1:00 p.m. in
7 this room. For any member of the public who wishes
8 to testify but cannot make it to the hearing, you can
9 submit your testimony to the Finance Division at the
10 Council's website at
11 council.nyc.gov/budget/testimony, and the staff will
12 make it a part of the official record. We will now
13 take a 10-minute break before we conclude today's
14 hearing with the Administration of Children's
15 Services. Thank you.

16 [break]

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: James
18 [sic] and Council Member Kallos. We will now
19 conclude the seventh day of budget hearings on Fiscal
20 2018's Executive Budget with testimony from ACS
21 Commissioner David Hansell. I'd like to note that
22 this is Commissioner Hansell's first Executive Budget
23 hearing as ACS Commissioner. Welcome. That's about
24 as nice as we're going to get.

25 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: The
3 Committees on Finance and General Welfare have been
4 joined by Chair Laurie Cumbo and the Women's Issues
5 Committee and Chair Fernando Cabrera and the Juvenile
6 Justice Committee. In the interest of time I will
7 forgo an opening statement and turn it over to my Co-
8 Chairs to deliver their opening remarks. We will
9 hear from Chair Levin followed by Chair Cumbo
10 followed by Chair Cabrera.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
12 Chair Ferreras-Copeland. I want to thank you very
13 much for this hearing and thank Commissioner Hansell
14 and his team for being here this afternoon. Today we
15 are going to be examining the Fiscal 18 Executive
16 Budget for Administration for Children's Services
17 which now totals 3.07 billion dollars. It includes
18 over 25 million dollars in new needs. Given that
19 ACS' Fiscal 18 Preliminary Budget did not include any
20 resources for new needs. I'm happy to see that the
21 agency's Executive Budget reflects 25 million dollars
22 in additional funding. Many of the Council's concerns
23 that were discussed at Preliminary Budget hearing
24 have been addressed through these new needs, in
25 particular, additional training and support for

2 preventive service workers and child protective
3 specialists. I'm also glad that ACS has budgeted
4 additional headcounts so that preventive and CPS
5 workers are actually able to participate in the rich
6 training that the agency provides through its
7 Workforce Institute, but there is still work to be
8 done. CPS attrition and morale issues have yet to be
9 tackled. It is my hope that by the time the budget is
10 adopted, some of those additional resources will be
11 allocated to help these two issues. The transition
12 of Early Learn and Headstart to the Department of
13 Education beginning in Fiscal 19, the largest overall
14 programmatic change in the City's entire Fiscal 18
15 budget and the largest programmatic change within ACS
16 in a many number of years. Now that ACS will no
17 longer be exclusively responsible for early childhood
18 education programs, I am interested in hearing about-
19 - hearing more about how the agency will focus on its
20 core mandate of child welfare, what recommendations
21 ACS is looking to implement as a result of the
22 monitors now placed in the agencies and what other
23 reforms we'd expect going forward. before we hear
24 from Chairs Cumbo and Cabrera, I'd also like to thank
25 Committee staff who worked on this hearing: Dohini

2 Sompura, Finance Unit Head, Andrea Vasquez, Counsel
3 to the Committee, Tanya Cyrus, Policy Analyst as well
4 as my staff Johnathan Bouche, My chief of staff, Ed
5 Paulino [sp?], my Budget Director, and my former
6 Legislative Director, Julie Barrow, who is now with
7 the City Ledge Department over at the Mayor's Office.
8 And with that, I'll turn it back to my Co-Chair.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair
10 Ferreras-Copeland. Thank you, Chair Levin. Good
11 afternoon and welcome Commissioner Hansell. I'm
12 Laurie Cumbo, Chair of the Women's Issues Committee.
13 I'd like to thank Chair Ferreras-Copeland and Chair
14 Levin for their support and collaboration with the
15 committee. I'd also like to thank my committee staff
16 Finance Unit Sompura, Counsel Killawan [sp?], and
17 Policy Analyst Polvoni [sp?] for their work in
18 preparing this hearing. The largest programmatic
19 change reflected in ACS' Fiscal 2018 Executive Budget
20 is the transition of EarlyLearn and Head Start to the
21 Department of Education, as Chair Levin stated. This
22 is part of the Administration's new vision to create
23 a comprehensive Early Childhood Agency that creates a
24 continuum of early care and education programs for
25 New York City children ages birth to five. This

2 transition also allows ACS to focus on its core
3 mandate of child welfare, which is especially crucial
4 given the number of high profile child deaths over
5 the last fiscal year, almost all of whom had previous
6 contact with ACS. As Chair of the Women's Issues
7 Committee, I would like to focus on how this
8 transition will be implemented and in particular how
9 it impacts the EarlyLearn request for proposal, RFP,
10 as contracts are set to expire in Fiscal 2018. One
11 of my greatest concerns is making sure that
12 community-based not-for-profit daycare providers that
13 have been servicing our communities for decades are
14 not eliminated through this new process and this new
15 transition. For the three and a half years that I
16 have been here, it has been a continuous fight to
17 make sure that those organizations are kept whole and
18 want to make sure through this hearing today that we
19 understand exactly how we're going to do that and how
20 the RFP process is going to be made more fair,
21 equitable and transparent. I want to ensure that ACS
22 and DOE work closely together when developing the RFP
23 and that lessons learned from the roll out of the
24 previous EarlyLearn solicitation will be applied and
25 a more thoughtful process will be in place. That

2 engages the provider community as well as looking at
3 the needs of the communities that are served under
4 this program. Thank you, and I look forward to
5 hearing from Commissioner Hansell.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Thank
7 you so much to all my Co-chairs, and welcome,
8 Commissioner. Good afternoon. I am Council Member
9 Fernando Cabrera, Chair of the Juvenile Justice
10 Committee. I'm going to keep my opening remarks
11 short in the interest of time. I sit here today
12 happy to say that New York no longer has the dubious
13 distinction of being one of the two states that
14 prosecutes all 16 and 17 year olds in the justice
15 system as adults. Under the recently passed Raise
16 the Age Law, 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be
17 sentenced to or detained in facilities with adults,
18 and no youth under the age of 18 will be held at
19 Rikers Island. My goal today is to better understand
20 ACS' plan to comply with the state law with the
21 partnership of the Department of Corrections, how
22 this impacts the consolidation of the Horizon
23 Juvenile Detention Center in the Bronx and Crossroads
24 Juvenile Detention Center in Brooklyn, and what
25 conversation is ACS having with the State to secure

2 additional funding to aid in covering the cost of the
3 Raise the Age legislation. Before we hear from
4 Commissioner Hansell, I want to thank Dohini Sompura,
5 Finance Unit Head, Beth Golub [sp?], our Legislative
6 Counsel, and Willie Hungotsch [sp?], our Policy
7 Analyst for the work it did in putting together
8 today's budget hearing. I look forward to hearing
9 from the Commissioner-- from you, Commissioner.
10 Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
12 you, Chair. Commissioner, after you're sworn in by
13 my counsel, you may begin your testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do affirm to tell the
15 truth, the whole truth and nothing but in your
16 testimony before the committee today and to respond
17 honestly to Council Member questions?

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I do. Thank you
19 very much. Good afternoon, Chair Ferreras-Copeland,
20 Chair Levin, Chair Cabrera, and Chair Cumbo, and
21 members of your four committees. As you know, I am
22 David Hansell, Commissioner of the New York City
23 Administration for Children's Services. With me are
24 Eric Brettschneider, First Deputy Commissioner, Susan
25 Nuccio, Deputy Commissioner of Financial Services,

2 and Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner of Youth and
3 Family Justice, and other members of my management
4 team. Thank you for welcoming me to my first
5 Executive Budget hearing and for this opportunity to
6 discuss ACS' Fiscal Year 2018 Executive Budget with
7 you. I have now had the honor to serve as ACS
8 Commissioner for slightly more than two months. Over
9 that time, I've spoken with hundreds of staff in all
10 of our program areas, met with most of our provider
11 partners, and visited many of our facilities across
12 the City. Every encounter has increased my
13 admiration for the work that our ACS team and our
14 partner organizations do, each and every day, to
15 protect our children and ensure that our City's
16 safety net for struggling families is as strong as
17 possible. When I testified before you in March, I
18 talked about the top-to-bottom review that I was
19 undertaking, and I want to report to you today about
20 the major results of that review and the reforms it
21 has spurred. I will also talk about the investments
22 that are embodied in the Mayor's Executive Budget for
23 Fiscal Year 2018, and describe a number of
24 significant initiatives we have underway in our
25 child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and

3 education programs, to promote healthy child
4 development, strengthen families, help young people
5 reach their full potential, and foster our thriving
6 communities. I assumed this role two months ago
7 knowing that the Council, and the public at large,
8 were concerned about recent incidents in which ACS
9 was involved. Immediately after my appointment as
10 Commissioner, I initiated a top-to-bottom review to
11 identify strengths and gaps throughout the agency,
12 and to make necessary changes in our child protection
13 and preventive work. As a result of this review, we
14 have thus far relaunched a new ChildStat model,
15 enhanced our collaboration with the NYPD, embarked on
16 major initiatives to strengthen our child protective
17 activities, and reinvigorated the response to many
18 prior external investigative findings. I want to
19 describe these activities to you in some detail. One
20 of my first areas of focus was the restructuring and
21 reinvigoration of the ChildStat model. ChildStat is
22 a vital tool in strengthening the agency's focus on
23 performance accountability around child protection,
24 and building a more unified culture of excellence in
25 practice areas across all five boroughs. The newly
restructured ChildStat which we launched just last

2 week is the result of extensive review and analysis
3 of previous iterations, observation of NYPD's
4 CompStat, and incorporation of best practices from
5 other jurisdictions. It features the following major
6 components: An emphasis on frequent, rigorous review
7 of randomly selected high risk cases, including
8 ongoing investigations, and a deep analysis of
9 critical performance data; inclusion of regular
10 participation of executive leadership, myself
11 included, to demonstrate the priority placed on the
12 process; a focus on accountability at all levels of
13 the agency; continuity from session to session to
14 ensure that change results from each meeting; and
15 Engagement of Division of Child Protection management
16 across the city by video cast and through borough-
17 based sessions, to disseminate the learnings and
18 improvements that result. Our goal in this new model
19 is to be rigorous but not punitive, with a focus not
20 on blame but on honest discussion that leads to
21 accountability and quality improvement. NYPD Chief
22 of Detectives Robert Boyce has advised us on the new
23 ChildStat model, based on his CompStat expertise. In
24 addition to advising our ChildStat reforms, NYPD is
25 collaborating on other important areas of our child

2 protective work. Working with the NYPD, we are
3 enhancing our protocols around requesting police
4 assistance in high-risk child protective cases, and
5 have instituted a new notification process to alert
6 the multidisciplinary team leaders at the Child
7 Advocacy Centers of incoming Instant Response Team
8 cases. NYPD and our CPS staff frequently encounter
9 each other in the course of their respective work in
10 the community, and as I mentioned when I was last
11 here in March, our DCP Borough Offices are building
12 stronger relationships with the NYPD's Neighborhood
13 Coordination Officers on the ground in the community.
14 Now when our CPS workers request police assistance
15 while working in the community, they are more likely
16 to receive this assistance from a familiar face. As
17 I discussed at the Preliminary Budget Hearing, Casey
18 Family Programs, a nationally recognized child
19 welfare organization, has conducted a review of
20 system-wide data and a statistically-valid sample of
21 cases to complete a comprehensive assessment of ACS'
22 initiatives, policies, casework practice, and
23 decision-making processes. Casey's findings and
24 recommendations from their assessment were submitted
25 to ACS last week, and we are currently reviewing them

2 in depth. The assessment found that overall, ACS has
3 a strong system with core safety practices in place,
4 serves as a national model for the collection and use
5 of child welfare data to match services with
6 families' needs, is a national leader in investing in
7 a continuum of preventive services and supports, and
8 generally performs well in relation to other large
9 cities and other jurisdictions in New York State.
10 Casey identified several areas of particular
11 strength, including CPS' overall assessments of
12 children, families, and homes; their service referral
13 and linkage; and our overall child safety assessment.
14 They also identified areas of opportunity for us at
15 ACS, as well as the state, and our partners where we
16 can improve, including modernizing the state's tools
17 for assessing safety and risk, which have been in
18 place for more than 25 years. Casey provided ACS
19 with a set of 12 recommendations for strengthening
20 our practice. Work is already underway to address
21 several of them, including streamlining our process
22 for updating, communicating, and reinforcing safety
23 policies with our frontline staff. We look forward
24 to working with our partners to analyze Casey's
25 findings, and we will develop solutions that

2 implement all of their recommendations. In addition,
3 our work with our state-appointed monitor, Kroll
4 Associates, has commenced, and we have found the
5 relationship to be collegial and productive, as we
6 await their recommendations. Kroll has begun to meet
7 staff and has initiated their case review, which will
8 include child protective and preventive cases. We
9 have also received recommendations from our
10 management consultant on organizational structure and
11 process. Lastly, we've completed our full-scale
12 review of the external findings and recommendations
13 that were issued over the last few years. Our review
14 included an analysis of ACS' progress in implementing
15 those recommendations, identification of
16 recommendations that need to be expedited, and an
17 assessment of the ways in which recent assessments
18 and reforms impact implementation of these
19 recommendations. Overall, a total of 73
20 recommendations followed from those recent reviews
21 and reports, and ACS accepted all but five of them.
22 I am currently reviewing those five recommendations
23 that were previously not accepted by ACS and
24 determining whether any should now be adopted and
25 implemented. Of the 68 recommendations that were

2 accepted, ACS has fully implemented 36, and the 32
3 remaining are well on their way to full
4 implementation. We've also identified the most
5 significant barriers to implementation of the
6 remaining recommendations and are working to remedy
7 them. While this management review has been an
8 important immediate component of my work, we have
9 also been moving our reform agenda forward
10 aggressively in many areas, and I'd like to give you
11 an overview of them. We're making significant
12 ongoing and new investments in preventive services.
13 The FY 2018 Executive Budget includes funding to
14 continue our historic expansion of preventive
15 services, from 12,500 slots at the end of the
16 previous administration to almost 16,000 slots when
17 fully ramped up by Fiscal Year 19. The budget
18 provides additional resources to support our partner
19 agencies by funding case conferencing and training
20 activities that I'll describe below. We estimate the
21 increased value of these additions and the
22 accompanying citywide wage adjustment increases to be
23 approximately 1,500 dollars per preventive service
24 slot. To strengthen decision making and reduce
25 future risk of harm to children after ending

2 preventive cases, ACS instituted new case
3 conferencing protocols in the fall of 2016, including
4 a requirement that programs invite ACS to facilitate
5 a service termination conference with families in
6 cases assessed before or during preventive services
7 as having high service needs. This allows for
8 additional safety and risk assessment and
9 strengthening of decision making before cases are
10 closed. However, this reform resulted in a lag in
11 preventive case closings, reducing the availability
12 of placements for new cases and contributing to a
13 waitlist for families in need of services. Prior to
14 this change in policy, preventive programs were not
15 required to have these conferences. Many of our
16 provider agencies did not have adequate capacity to
17 attend or facilitate the conferences without taking
18 staff away from their other supervisory roles or
19 conflicting with other areas of their daily work. To
20 meet that need, the FY 18 Executive Budget adds 11.2
21 million dollars to support the addition of 147
22 facilitators at our preventive agencies. Through the
23 Workforce Institute, ACS is developing a new 12-day
24 onboarding curriculum to support training for new
25 preventive agency staff before they receive any

cases. The curriculum will consist of a new two-day course available once a month for all new preventive staff before they take the cases, followed by an additional 10-day course provided every other month, which new staff will complete within two months of hiring. In addition, new funding of 2.45 million dollars will be available to preventive agencies so that they can send staff to six days of required training each year. Again, we recognize that sending front line staff, such as case workers and supervisors, to training has created coverage challenges for preventive agencies. To address that, we'll cover the costs associated with that case coverage while staff fulfill this new training requirement. Providers can satisfy the training requirement by participating in their own courses, courses offered by other agencies, or courses offered by our own Workforce Institute. Coming out of the resiliency work with non-profit providers, the Administration has indicated that specific categories of non-profit providers will undergo a model contract review process. ACS intends to begin this process with many of our preventive providers and we expect this review to be completed over the summer. As part

2 of this process, ACS has begun to review preventive
3 contract budgets to assess where more resources may
4 be needed. All of this work is being done in
5 conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget
6 and builds upon the commitments I've just identified
7 in the Executive Budget for funding providers for
8 conference facilitators and training. In expanding
9 our continuum of preventive services, we're making a
10 deliberate effort to bolster services for our higher-
11 risk families under Court-Ordered Supervision. The
12 process began this month for amending contracts with
13 our preventive providers to add 960 additional slots
14 specifically for families under Court Ordered
15 Supervision or at risk of court intervention. This
16 will be completed by November. Many of these slots
17 will be concentrated in communities in the Bronx and
18 Brooklyn where a disproportionately high need for
19 services has been identified. Also, we'll be
20 procuring 500 slots for services to help families
21 experiencing domestic violence. Remaining funds, up
22 to \$10.4 million, will support an additional 600
23 slots to expand services for families under Court-
24 Ordered Supervision citywide, including in Manhattan,
25 Queens and Staten Island. And finally, we're adding

2 4.6 million dollars this summer to fund transition
3 support services for families as children are
4 discharged from foster care and reunify with their
5 families. The Executive Budget also will add 1.1
6 million dollars for us to hire 17 additional staff
7 for our Office of Referral Management within the
8 Division of Prevention Services, to promote
9 efficiency in our process for making referrals to
10 preventive services. The additional staff will
11 perform several key functions to improve efficiency,
12 such as facilitating communication between our
13 Division of Child Protection and our preventive
14 providers to ensure alignment of family need with
15 services that are being provided, performing
16 clearances to ensure child welfare history is well
17 documented in each referral, tracking the
18 availability of preventive slots community by
19 community across the system, and matching children
20 and families with the preventive models that most
21 appropriately meet their needs. The staff will be
22 better equipped to monitor staffing concerns at all
23 preventive agencies, and redistribute slots as
24 necessary. This office will also add administrative
25 staff to speed up and track referrals as they're

2 processed by our preventive agencies. In addition,
3 we are working with the respected child welfare
4 entity Chapin Hall in Chicago, to analyze our
5 business processes and determine ways in which we can
6 streamline our service referrals even further. And
7 in the longer term, we will look at technology
8 support to improve this business process. Domestic
9 violence, of course, has a devastating impact on many
10 of our families, children and communities. Thirty-
11 eight percent of families with ACS involvement have
12 some history of domestic violence. Tackling domestic
13 violence and its adverse impact on families requires
14 the collaboration of multiple City agencies and
15 provider organizations. As you may know, the Mayor's
16 Office convened a Domestic Violence Task Force, and
17 earlier this month the Task Force issued
18 recommendations for the implementation of a
19 coordinated response to prevent domestic violence,
20 help victims and their families heal, and hold
21 perpetrators accountable. As part of the Task
22 Force's recommendations and to enhance the child
23 welfare system's ability to intervene in cases
24 involving domestic violence, ACS is extending our
25 Investigative Consultant unit, to support our

2 preventive services providers in service planning and
3 to enhance the safety of children, particularly
4 children who are not yet in school. Currently, our
5 CPS staff have access to Investigative Consultants
6 who can assist them in identifying domestic violence
7 and other safety risks in the course of a child
8 protective investigation. The Executive Budget funds
9 the addition of four Preventive staff and twelve
10 dedicated Investigative Consultants who will assist
11 our preventive providers in cases where domestic
12 violence concerns are indicated, so that providers
13 also have access to the comprehensive family
14 information they need to make thorough safety
15 assessments in their cases. On average, about 50
16 infant fatalities occur each year due to unsafe
17 sleeping practices. As part of our ongoing work to
18 prevent such tragedies, we will launch, one week from
19 today, our new Safe Sleep public awareness campaign,
20 in partnership with the Department of Health and
21 Mental Hygiene. The multipronged campaign will
22 concentrate on zip codes with the highest numbers of
23 Safe Sleep fatalities, mainly in the Bronx and
24 Brooklyn. As you'll be able to see, I think in just
25 a minute, the campaign will feature the simple and

3 clear message that our children's lives depend on
4 safe sleep practices: infants sleeping alone, on
5 their backs, in their own crib or bassinet and
6 without blankets, pillows, or toys, and the campaign
7 will clearly highlight specific unsafe practices,
8 such as sharing a bed with an infant and placing an
9 infant to sleep on its stomach. The campaign will
10 feature posters, and you're seeing the mock-ups here,
11 in check cashing venues, laundromats, barbershops and
12 salons at 530 locations, 80 bus shelter ads, and the
13 dissemination of more than 40,000 brochures in five
14 languages. In addition, there will be promotion on
15 social media and a video should be distributed at the
16 end of June. We'll focus our collaboration on
17 hospitals and birthing centers, which are vital
18 messengers of child safety information for maternity
19 patients. We're eager to spread awareness of this
20 important issue, and hope the Council can join us in
21 promoting this campaign. Moving on to Child
22 Protection: In the weeks since my appointment as
23 Commissioner, I've met with CPS staff across the
24 city, including visits to three DCP borough offices
25 in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island, toward the
goal of visiting all 17 of them in the coming months.

2 I've shadowed two CPS Units in the field, and I
3 visited the Child Advocacy Center in Staten Island.
4 I also plan to meet with each graduating CPS class at
5 our training academy, and I'll speak to our newest
6 cohort of CPS trainees on May 26 at the James
7 Satterwhite Academy location in Queens. My time with
8 our frontline CPS staff has allowed me to hear
9 firsthand from many of them about the challenges they
10 face in their day-to-day work, and has given me the
11 unique opportunity to receive their ideas for
12 improvement, many of which we are moving aggressively
13 to implement. Based in part on the experiences CPS
14 workers have shared with me, I've expedited and
15 implemented several technology-related reforms that
16 improve our investigative capacity and resources. As
17 of April 20th, we are providing internet access on
18 all ACS-issued smartphones. CPS staff are now able
19 to use their ACS smartphones to search subject names
20 and addresses, to help families navigate systems such
21 as housing, public assistance, child care assistance
22 and other benefit programs. Internet access has also
23 gives staff the capability to access domestic
24 violence, substance abuse, medical, and mental health
25 resources as needed while working in the community.

3 We have also installed quick access icons on the
4 smartphones so that helpful materials, such as
5 informational videos, are more readily accessible to
6 staff, especially when they're working with families
7 in their homes. One such video called "A Life to
8 Love," speaks to recommended care for infants,
9 including a segment on safe sleep practices that we
10 would like to share with you. I want to show you a
11 clip of this. It's a strong message, as you'll see,
12 but imagine the impact that this would have when a
13 Child Protective Specialist is working with a family,
14 with a parent, in their home with an infant, giving
15 them information in real time in a situation where it
16 can be put immediately to work.

17 [video presentation]

18 VIDEO SPEAKER: Every year, young
19 children are smothered by their parents while
20 sleeping in the same bed. In this scene, the father
21 fortunately noticed the safety risk and acted before
22 tragedy occurred. Remember, a crib is the safest
23 place for a baby. Another threat to sleeping infants
24 is SIDS. Short for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome,
25 SIDS kills infants while they sleep. Mistakenly
called "crib death," SIDS has nothing to do with

3 sleeping in a crib. The causes are not fully
4 understood, but we do know that the risk is greatly
5 reduced by laying babies on their back when you put
6 them to sleep. It's that simple. As you place them
7 in the crib, remember this saying, "back to sleep."
8 It may save your baby's life."

9 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's an intense
10 and powerful message, but imagine the impact of
11 showing that to a parent at a time when they can
12 really act on that information. Going along with
13 technology, we're also launching a pilot for the
14 deployment of tablet devices for use by our CPS
15 staff. The tablets will provide access to all
16 databases and case records used to research family
17 history in the field, and allow CPS to enter case
18 information directly into the electronic case record
19 system from outside of the office. This will make
20 the use of non-investigative time more efficient for
21 CPS staff, including while waiting for court cases to
22 be called, during travel time to conduct
23 investigations, or between field assignments, and
24 will reduce reliance on paper notes. On June 30th we
25 plan to launch a three-month pilot with 300 CPS staff
to evaluate the use of various tablets in the field

2 and to assess their experience using the devices.

3 And after this trial period we plan to begin
4 distributing tablets to all CPS staff in the fall.

5 Our CPS staff are first responders who work in every
6 corner of the city, at every hour of the day, and

7 often encounter dangerous situations. We will
8 continue to seek and support aggressive enforcement

9 of felony provisions for assaulting a CPS worker in
10 the line of duty. And to further promote their

11 safety as they do this difficult work, ACS is
12 procuring an enhanced smartphone app that will

13 activate a request for NYPD assistance when CPS feel
14 they are at risk. The app uses a cord plugged into

15 the smartphone's headphone jack that will

16 automatically activate a call for assistance when
17 pulled out of the jack. And I'll demonstrate this

18 here. It's probably hard to see this far away, but
19 it's very simple. They put it in here when they go

20 into the home, and if they're in a situation where

21 they feel at risk, all they do is pull this out, and
22 it's on their wrist, out of the phone. That

23 automatically activates a call to a central number
24 that then triggers a call directly to 911, and

25 because they have a smart phone, the GPS will tell

911 exactly where they are, and NYPD backup can be provided. And that's only the beginning of the functionality that we ultimately will be implementing with the safety app. So there's much more that will be coming in the near future. There's no priority greater than the safety of our CPS workers, and we're moving aggressively to make sure that we're protecting them. More than 7,200 frontline staff from ACS and our provider agency partners have participated in our learning programs since the launch of the ACS Workforce Institute in early 2016. It's a 12 million dollar City investment, a collaboration between ACS and the City University of New York that is designed to build the professional strength in all of our child welfare and juvenile justice workforce. The Institute is helping our professionals develop and sharpen the interviewing, investigation, and interpersonal skills that they need for effective family engagement. The coaching courses offered at the Workforce Institute boost the leadership capacity of frontline supervisors and managers, and deepen their assessment and decision-making skills. But we want to make sure that the best practices from training and coaching aren't just

2 taught at the Institute, but are built into everyday
3 practice. This coming year, ACS is placing Workforce
4 Institute coaches in all DCP borough offices. This
5 2.3 million dollar investment established in the FY
6 18 Executive Budget will create a dedicated team of
7 coaches who will provide direct support for child
8 protective supervisors and managers to help ensure
9 that the knowledge and skills gained in training
10 programs are transferred and fully integrated into a
11 staff's day to-day work. We expect that the
12 initiative will build a strong bridge between
13 training and practice. It will help us improve staff
14 retention, and will help us to maintain a healthy
15 work culture. I look forward to discussing with the
16 Council additional needs to support our frontline CPS
17 workers, as FY18 budget conversations continue.
18 There's much more that we need to do. Twenty-five
19 percent of families in the DHS shelter system also
20 have child welfare involvement with ACS, and we're
21 committed to expanding our collaboration with DHS to
22 ensure that these families receive the services and
23 interventions they need. This past March, just after
24 I started, ACS and DHS signed a Memorandum of
25 Understanding that builds on our existing practices

2 to enhance coordination between our agencies and our
3 providers, and to better support ACS-involved
4 families residing in the shelter system. This MOU,
5 which we expect to be fully implemented by this fall,
6 requires ACS and DHS to share information and to
7 notify each other at critical points in a family's
8 case, such as when a family that ACS serves enters
9 shelter, when there is a plan for a family to change
10 shelters, or when there's a change in one of our
11 child welfare case that may require a different level
12 of intervention by DHS. In addition, the agreement
13 will also require shelter providers to issue vital
14 information to families, such as information on
15 availability of child care and safe sleep practices
16 for infants. One of our most noteworthy achievements
17 has been the safe reduction in the number of New York
18 City children in foster care to historic lows. As of
19 February of this year, there were 8,993 children in
20 foster care, compared to a census of over 41,000
21 children in care when ACS was established 20 years
22 ago. We are proud that 90 percent of children in
23 foster care are placed in family settings rather than
24 in institutional settings, one of the best standards
25 of performance in the country. Through several

2 strategies, such as expanding intensive family
3 supports to stabilize families and employing new
4 approaches to helping relatives and friends care for
5 children, fewer children need to be separated from
6 their families. When foster care is necessary, we
7 have made progress in improving permanency outcomes
8 for children and youth. Nevertheless, we face
9 continuing challenges in reducing the time some
10 children remain in foster care prior to achieving
11 permanency, in recruiting the number and range of
12 foster homes we need, and in helping older youth
13 transition successfully to independence. I'd like to
14 discuss some of the initiatives we're undertaking to
15 address those challenges. While the number of
16 children in foster care continues to decline, we know
17 we can do better to achieve permanency, expedite
18 reunification when it's safe, and reduce long stays
19 in foster care. One of the ways we are working to do
20 that is through our "No Time to Wait" Initiative,
21 which aims to expedite permanency for youth in foster
22 care through several targeted strategies. One such
23 strategy is a focus on improving family visiting
24 between children and their parents. The majority of
25 children who enter foster care are able to safely

2 return home to their families, and quality visits
3 when the child is in care are critical for promoting
4 reunification. Last year, 2,500 children were
5 reunified with their families, and the proportion of
6 children who re-entered foster care after
7 reunification fell from 9.1 percent in 2015 to 7.9
8 percent in 2016. Through "No Time to Wait," we're
9 also helping children achieve permanency through
10 adoption and kinship guardianship. Kin guardianship
11 avoids the need to terminate parental rights, and
12 allows relatives and family friends to care for
13 children with the same financial support as adoptive
14 parents. I have started and will be meeting
15 regularly with the Honorable Jeannette Ruiz,
16 Administrative Judge of the Family Court, to discuss
17 how we can partner more effectively with the courts
18 in many areas, including expediting permanency where
19 termination of parental rights may be required as a
20 prerequisite to adoption. Through increased staff
21 training and streamlining processes such as
22 centralizing birth certificate requests, ACS and our
23 provider partners increased the number of adoptions
24 by five percent from 2015 to 2016, and the number of
25 children achieving permanency through kinship

2 guardianship increased by 25 percent over the same
3 time period. All of these efforts have resulted in
4 an eight percent reduction from July 2016 to April
5 2017 in the number of young children aged 12 and
6 under who remain in foster care for more than two
7 years. To drive home permanency-- to drive
8 permanency for all children, we initiated the Rapid
9 Permanency Reviews in partnership with Casey Family
10 Programs. The RFRs reviewed the cases of 2,500
11 children who have been in foster care for two years
12 or more to examine the commonalities, the barriers,
13 and promising opportunities to expedite permanency
14 for those children. We'll complete all of these
15 reviews by the end of this month and we're working
16 with our foster care providers, with the Family
17 Court, and others to address practice issues related
18 to these cases in real time. We look forward to
19 sharing a plan to address these barriers to
20 permanency at the end of the year as part of our
21 reporting requirements to the Council under Local Law
22 143. While we're working hard to make sure children
23 spend less time in the foster care system, we're
24 working just as hard to improve their experiences
25 while they are in care. By far, one of the most

3 important impacts on a young person's experience in
4 foster care is the family who cares for them while
5 they're in placement. Ultimately, a foster family
6 becomes among the most significant groups of people
7 in a child's life. While in foster care, we want all
8 of our young people to achieve their developmental
9 milestones and experience childhood as their peers
10 do. Through our "Home Away from Home" initiative
11 we're focused on improving the quality of foster care
12 placements to enhance child well-being. Research
13 shows that children in foster care tend to fare best
14 when placed with relatives, so we're increasing
15 placements with relatives whenever possible. We're
16 also increasing our pool of foster parents to improve
17 matches between children and foster homes, and we are
18 providing supports to foster parents to help the
19 foster home thrive. We're awarding two million
20 dollars in new funding over two years to five foster
21 care agencies to pilot new approaches to recruit
22 foster parents and provide support. We've also
23 created a new \$300,000 fund to help cover incidental
24 expenses that foster parents often incur during the
25 foster home certification process, such as making
necessary home repairs. Finally, with a \$1.1 million

2 grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, we're
3 working with experts to provide intensive assistance
4 to our foster care agencies to develop and support
5 foster homes specifically for older youth in care.
6 Young people in foster care need wraparound services
7 and support that actively prepares them before they
8 transition out of foster care with the tools they
9 need to build a successful future. To support older
10 youth in care, we've just issued a concept paper,
11 which is published on our website, and we plan to
12 issue an RFP to re-establish what are called
13 Supervised Independent Living Programs, or SILPs,
14 with a capacity of 40 beds. The SILPs will offer
15 short-term, six to twelve-month housing for young
16 adults in foster care ages 18 and older. With the
17 re-establishment of SILPs, older youth in care will
18 once again be able to benefit from home-like settings
19 that prepare them for independent living, and connect
20 them to educational and employment support and
21 community resources. We're making good progress in
22 this area, but we're going to continue to work
23 aggressively to reduce the foster care census, to
24 promote kinship placements, and to expedite
25 permanency. Now, to move on to juvenile justice,

2 another very important area, I want to take a minute
3 to start by discussing the progress that we've made
4 with our City partners in serving youth and families
5 in the juvenile justice system, which has paved the
6 way for the expansion of our youth and family-focused
7 framework to 16 and 17 year olds under the recently
8 passed Raise the Age legislation. New York City has
9 seen significant improvements in the juvenile justice
10 system over the past few years. Here are a few of
11 them: Juvenile arrests have decreased dramatically,
12 down 55 percent from 2011 to 2015. Admissions to
13 detention have decreased 22 percent from 2014 to
14 2016. While admissions are declining, so are lengths
15 of stay in detention, and we consistently see a large
16 percentage of youth staying in detention for less
17 than a day. Admissions to non-secure placement are
18 down 31 percent from 2014 to 2016. In 2016 our
19 Juvenile Justice Initiative, JJI, which is an
20 alternative-to-placement diversion program, served
21 more than 200 young people who would otherwise have
22 been placed in a non-secure placement residence.
23 These youth and their families received intensive in-
24 home, evidence-based therapeutic services along with
25 added educational supports. As the number of youth

2 in out-of-home juvenile justice residential settings
3 declines, we continue to serve a greater number of
4 young people in our juvenile justice preventive
5 programs. Our Family Assessment Program, FAP,
6 identifies services and provides referrals to help
7 families work through their challenges before the
8 need for court intervention arises. In 2016, FAP
9 served over 5,000 families. For the first time,
10 we're now working to link all youth leaving detention
11 and their families with referrals to our preventive
12 FAP program, in an effort to help these young people
13 avoid further involvement in the juvenile justice or
14 adult justice system. As you know, Close to Home
15 allows youth who have been adjudicated juvenile
16 delinquents to be placed in non-secure or limited-
17 secure residences located in or near the five
18 boroughs. Close to Home is guided by a positive
19 youth development framework that recognizes young
20 people's capacity to rise above their challenges with
21 support from their families and their communities,
22 and with services and programs that promote social
23 and vocational engagement, education, creative arts,
24 and positive adult and peer mentoring. Our Close to
25 Home program is grounded in a number of key

principles, including: Public Safety, which means youth receiving intensive supervision and monitoring by our program staff. We've created a comprehensive quality assurance and oversight monitoring regimen, which includes inspecting each Close to Home site twice a quarter. In 2016, for example, we made 348 site inspections to our 29 Close to Home sites. In terms of family engagement and collaboration, Close to Home is structured to develop, support and maintain permanent connections for the youth and their families, allowing frequent and meaningful opportunities to participate in treatment. Right now, we are partnering with Community Connections for Youth to provide young people and their families' access to coaches and peer mentors to help them navigate the juvenile justice system. Evidence-based and trauma-informed treatment is a cardinal part of Close to Home system. Almost all of our young people in juvenile justice have experienced trauma in some form. Close to Home uses a strength-based continuum of care that empowers and supports through services that have a proven track record of results. Educational continuity and achievement is central to Close to Home, and we do that through the ability of

young people to achieve individualized educational services through the Department of Education, allowing them to earn transferrable academic credits. Of our nine-- our 191 Close to Home students enrolled in the 2015-16 academic year, 75 percent of them earned academic credit and those students passed over 88 percent of their courses. And finally community reintegration: Once young people are discharged from residential care, youth remain connected to positive adults, peers, and community supports embedded in their neighborhoods. A hallmark of our entire continuum of juvenile justice services is our involvement and partnership with families and the community, key assets for helping to prevent youth from entering our system, and helping them prepare to return to their home community from the system. To better support our work with families and the community, we will open the Bronx Family Support Center next month. The Center, which is being established in partnership with the Vera Institute, is the first of its kind and will be located adjacent to the Bronx Family Court to facilitate engagement and retention of families who have children in Close to Home, and for families in need of or participating

2 in the Family Assessment or PINS Diversion program
3 and alternative programs like JJI. This new one-stop
4 center will integrate the services of our entire
5 juvenile justice continuum, so families can be more
6 involved in their children's progress, and it will
7 bring together local partners like the NYPD, school
8 suspension centers, and community-based service
9 providers. Now, all of that is the backdrop to Raise
10 the Age, and we're delighted that New York State will
11 finally treat our young people as young people in our
12 justice system, and we look forward to working with
13 our partners to extend the principles and services of
14 our detention and Close to Home programs to 16 and
15 17-year-olds, including broadening our community-
16 based programs, expanding our residential continuum
17 to include adolescent detention facilities, and
18 delivering program models and treatments at these
19 facilities that meet the developmental needs of older
20 adolescents. With the success of the young people
21 we've served and the strides we've made to build a
22 juvenile justice system that promotes positive youth
23 development, we join the Mayor, the Council, and our
24 partner City agencies in embracing the passage of
25 Raise the Age legislation as a critical and long-

2 overdue reform. We're working in partnership with
3 the Mayor's Office and our sister City agencies on
4 planning to implement the initial requirements of the
5 Raise the Age legislation by October 1, 2018. A
6 citywide working group meets on a weekly basis to
7 identify and work through specific issues around
8 implementation, such as siting, facility
9 specifications, procurements, funding, and legal and
10 regulatory requirements, to name only a few. Our
11 Division of Youth and Family Justice also conducts
12 weekly internal meetings with our key ACS divisions
13 and program areas to identify and plan for ACS-
14 specific implementation actions. Much of our city's
15 planning hinges on getting clarification of
16 uncertainties in the legislation itself, as well as
17 clarification from state oversight bodies, the Office
18 of Children and Family Services and State Commission
19 of Correction, on the regulations that those two
20 agencies will be issuing that will apply to all of
21 our programs for this population of young people.
22 So, Raise the Age is a rapidly evolving endeavor.
23 While we continue to examine the costs associated
24 with implementation, we need the State to provide its
25 fair share of funding to support this massive reform.

2 We thank the Council for your advocacy in support of
3 the Raise the Age legislation, and we look forward to
4 working with you on implementation and in advocating
5 with the State for the funds, supports and
6 flexibility that we need to make this immensely
7 consequential reform a reality. Equally important,
8 we're excited to play a pivotal role in the Mayor's
9 expansion of pre-kindergarten, through 3-K for All,
10 to strengthen the continuum of high quality early
11 childhood education for children from birth to five-
12 years-old. Our evolving knowledge of brain
13 development underscores that early childhood is the
14 critical time to shape the foundation for life-long
15 learning, healthy development and growth. Since
16 2012, ACS' EarlyLearn NYC has provided high quality,
17 full-day early care and education to more than 30,000
18 children from birth through five-years-old. We're
19 proud that this program has become a pillar for
20 promoting healthy childhood development, while also
21 providing wraparound services to families, a hallmark
22 of EarlyLearn NYC. This past fall, ACS rolled out
23 the country's largest early childhood trauma-informed
24 care program, named Trauma Smart, to build our
25 children's ability to face challenges later in life.

2 In 2016, our centers achieved unprecedented "all
3 clear" audits from the Federal Office of Head Start.
4 As the Council heard in March, we have also
5 implemented a number of reforms to improve the
6 financial stability of our providers. With the
7 announcement of 3-K for All, the Mayor and the City
8 agencies also recognized that our children and
9 families will benefit greatly from a unified early
10 care and education system that is linked to the
11 larger K-12 system. Given the overlap of DOE's early
12 care and education programs with ACS' EarlyLearn NYC,
13 provided at 380 centers and via 30 family child care
14 networks, EarlyLearn New York City contracts will be
15 integrated into DOE's Division of Early Childhood
16 Education. This integration will create consistent
17 high quality standards across the publicly-funded
18 early childhood continuum that better transitions
19 children to elementary school. ACS has already been
20 working with DOE to begin the integration, which we
21 plan to complete by July 2018. 3-K for All will
22 ultimately be the largest program of its kind in the
23 nation, and will begin in the upcoming school year
24 with the creation of three-year-old preschool seats
25 in School District Seven in the South Bronx and

2 School District 23 in Brownsville, Brooklyn. ACS is
3 working with our EarlyLearn Providers, many of whom
4 already partner with the DOE to provide Pre-K for
5 All, to transition them to DOE. Teachers of three-
6 year-olds at EarlyLearn sites will begin to receive
7 additional support from DOE Instructional
8 Coordinators and Social Workers. Today, these
9 individuals focus on quality standards in four-year-
10 old classrooms; as the transition progresses, that
11 support will begin extending to EarlyLearn three-
12 year-old classrooms. ACS and DOE will also begin to
13 work with the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations, the
14 Day Care Council of New York, and District Council
15 1707 Locals 95 and 205, which represent EarlyLearn
16 center-based teachers, to help support teachers and
17 other employees of these programs. As EarlyLearn NYC
18 transfers to DOE, ACS will continue to administer the
19 City's child care voucher system. We will continue
20 our efforts to bolster the quality of care in this
21 system, which serves 29,000 children under the age of
22 five, in collaboration with HRA, the Department of
23 Health and Mental Hygiene and DOE. So, I know I've
24 covered quite a bit in my testimony, and I want to
25 thank you for the opportunity to discuss ACS' work

2 this afternoon. I'm honored to serve the children
3 and families of our city as ACS' Commissioner and am
4 humbled every day by the extraordinary dedication of
5 the thousands of women and men at ACS and our
6 provider agencies, and by the resilience and strength
7 of the children and families that we serve. I
8 consider it my charge to help our agency move beyond
9 a difficult period of transition and reform, and
10 forward to a future of innovation and accomplishment.
11 I also want to express my gratitude to the Council
12 for your leadership and for your steadfast support of
13 our efforts to make sure children and families are
14 safe and can thrive. I look forward to continuing
15 partnership in these efforts, and I'm happy to answer
16 your questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
18 you, Commissioner. I think you have officially held
19 the longest testimony before my committee. This
20 season isn't over, so we, you know-- no one will
21 outdo you. We've been joined by Council Members
22 Grodenchik, Koslowitz, Gibson, Johnson, and Barron.
23 We will have a-- all the Chairs will ask their
24 questions, then we will have a round of five minutes
25

2 for the first round of questions, and then it will be
3 followed by three minutes.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, I'm
6 going to jump right in into monitoring. About last
7 week we had News 4, the I-Team at News 4, did
8 investigative reporting that highlighted some issues
9 with monitoring. After the high-profile death of
10 Zymere Perkins, ACS has several monitors including a
11 State-appointed independent monitor, which is Kroll,
12 and an internal monitor as well as an outside
13 consulting firm to analyze and streamline management
14 structures, and I know that you mentioned them in
15 your testimony, but I wanted to have some clarity on
16 cost. What was the procurement process? Because it
17 is our-- it is to our knowledge that there is no
18 signed contract, that they've already started to do
19 work, that the work is anywhere between average 500
20 to 550 dollars an hour with multiple monitors in a
21 room at a time. So, can you walk me through this
22 process, and also is there a cap on spending?
23 Because it seems like we're just going ahead and
24 writing a check with no end.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEES ON GENERAL
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2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, as I said in
3 my March testimony then again today, as part of my
4 management review, I am relying on and utilizing the
5 input from several different sets of consultants:
6 Kroll Associates, which is the independent monitor
7 that was appointed by the State and which the City
8 accepted; Casey Family Programs which is a consultant
9 that actually we at ACS have worked with for years
10 and are continuing to work with.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Can you
12 tell me the cost for Case? Casey--

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] Casey
14 Family Programs?

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Yeah,
16 what's the cost for--

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] We'll
18 get you that information. I don't--

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
20 [interposing] And can you tell me the cost for
21 Chaplain?

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Sorry? Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Oh, it's
24 free.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEES ON GENERAL
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2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's pro-bono, so
3 it's free.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
5 And can you tell me the cost for Chaplain, which is
6 your other monitor that you mentioned in your
7 testimony.

8 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Chapin Hall,
9 that's--

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
11 [interposing] Chaplin [sic].

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's being funded--
13 - it's being funded through Casey Family Program, so
14 it's also--

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
16 [interposing] So, it's also free.

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yep.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And
19 Kroll?

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, with regard to
21 Kroll, we have-- there is actually an executed
22 contract that has not yet been registered. The City--
23 - it's going through the City procurement process
24 awaiting the submission of some information from
25 Kroll, and then we'll--

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

3 [interposing] So, what's the budget for Kroll?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, we don't know
5 what-- we don't know what exactly the budget will be,
6 but we are-- Kroll has begun its work as you
7 indicated, Chair, and--

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

9 [interposing] When did they start?

10 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: They started their
11 work in I believe late March. I think we had our
12 first meetings with them. We've done some
13 orientation work with them. They're reviewing
14 documents, some of the investigative reports and
15 things like that, and they have already interviewed a
16 number of our staff. We haven't yet received any
17 recommendation from them, but we're awaiting their
18 initial report.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, they
20 started in late March. Have they submitted to be
21 reimbursed yet for cost?

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We'll have to get--
23 - we'll get back to you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I don't
25 think you can look at anybody else over there.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, we'll get
3 you that information.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
5 So, I'd like to know, have they already begun
6 building?

7 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We'll get you that
8 information.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.
10 How many people on average are part of this
11 oversight? And also more clarity on your procurement
12 process, because there has to be a process, and when
13 does an agency start working with a monitor before
14 having a contract that clearly stipulates how we can
15 exit a contract. What's the beginning and end date?
16 Is there an end date to this monitoring?

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: In the agreement
18 that we have there is not a defined term.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, we
20 can essentially be paying this for several years?

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, what I will
22 say is, my goal here is to use this relationship with
23 Kroll to learn as much as we can about how to improve
24 our protective and preventive practice. I'm looking
25 forward, not backwards, and the relationship with

2 them so far, as I said in my testimony, has been
3 collegial, productive, professional, and I'm hoping
4 that the recommendations we receive from them are
5 going to be helpful to us in moving forward with our
6 reform activities at ACS.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right,
8 and you know, Commissioner, this is not focus-- I'm
9 not saying this to you, but at 500 dollars an hour,
10 they better be collegial and they better be
11 respectful.

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I couldn't agree
13 more.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: That is
15 the least that you should be expecting.

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I couldn't--

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
18 [interposing] However, I am very concerned that we've
19 been through this process, not with you,
20 Commissioner, but with several commissioners. Every
21 time we have a loss of life we go through this
22 process of evaluating the system, of creating these
23 12-point, 14, 16-point plans, and then not being able
24 to implement them or, you know, and I'm hoping and I
25 have faith in you that you will be able to, but I

2 just don't understand how we have a monitor reviewing
3 an agency that hasn't even implemented the last
4 recommendations. So, are they reviewing the agency
5 as-is? Because you just gave me 27 pages of
6 wonderful recommendations that you haven't even been
7 able to implement. So I would think that the agency
8 should be reviewing what you've implemented. That is
9 when I think-- that is really monitoring, giving you
10 an opportunity to implement your work that you've
11 highlighted in this testimony, and then we monitor
12 and we evaluate that. But they're going to tell you
13 exactly what's wrong, what you already know and what
14 you've already done by meeting with your staff and
15 talking to your staff and figuring out what your
16 staff needs, and so that is why I'm a little
17 perplexed on the timing of this monitoring besides
18 the cost of it.

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, first of
20 all, with respect, Chair, we have implemented, as I
21 said, we have fully implemented about half of the
22 recommendations that we received recently as a result
23 of the investigative reports the last few years, and
24 we're in the process of implementing the remainder of
25 them. SO we are implementing them. And I do expect,

2 as you said, I think you're absolutely right. I do
3 expect that, and what will be helpful to us is for
4 Kroll to review our implementation, not the plans,
5 but the actual work that we're doing to implement the
6 plans, and that makes absolute sense to me, and I
7 think that is the scope of work that they are
8 undertaking.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, if
10 Kroll, if we're going to say that they're going to
11 monitor the plan, which we're hoping works, right?
12 Because that's why you were brought on, to implement
13 a plan that works. It's almost as if we're
14 challenging you as if you're-- or we're monitoring
15 you as if you're failing, but you're not. You
16 haven't even been given an opportunity to prove that
17 it works. So we're monitoring something that we
18 haven't even given you an opportunity to implement,
19 and when I say implement, I'm saying fully, not the
20 half program. It just seems that you have a lot of
21 oversight over oversight over evaluations over
22 monitors, and you know, we're beginning to lose faith
23 here in the council that any of this can get done
24 because we've been here so many times.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, I hear your
3 concern, and I appreciate. I obviously can't speak to
4 things that happened before I was in this role. What
5 I will-- I mean, and the decision to engage Kroll as
6 a monitor was a decision that was made by the State.
7 City accepted it, but the State made the decision,
8 and the timing was the decision made by the State.
9 We accepted that decision. That actually happened
10 also before I was here, but we accepted it because we
11 felt like the issues that Kroll is looking at around
12 our protective and preventive services are so
13 important and it's so critical that we get them
14 right, that if they can teach us something, if they
15 can give us a different perspective than the other
16 consultants we're working with, that is valuable
17 enough for us to pursue the engagement. That's what
18 we're hoping will happen. That's what I'm expecting
19 will happen, and as I say, based on our engagement so
20 far, that's what I'm very hopeful will happen.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And how
22 Kroll selected? Did you have any role in selecting
23 Kroll?

24 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: No, that was the
25 State's decision.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, the
3 State basically told you this is who your-- the per--
4 this is the monitoring group.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And is
7 that-- you know, with Casey and Chaplin, Chaplan,
8 Chaplin--

9 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing]
10 Chapin Hall.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Chapin.
12 There's-- I know it's Casey in particular. There's a
13 history of doing this work. Is Kroll known for doing
14 this type of work for children's services? Like, are
15 they experts in this that we don't know about?

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I'm probably not
17 the best person to speak to their expertise. I do
18 know they have experience in monitorships [sic]. I
19 don't know what their specific experience is around
20 child welfare, but as I say that-- Kroll was not our
21 selection. They were mandated on us by the State.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
23 I'm going to come back on the monitoring piece,
24 because I want to make sure that my colleagues have
25 an opportunity to ask their questions. And I know

2 that you addressed raise the Age. We spoke to the
3 DOC Commissioner. We have talked to as many people
4 who are a part of this process with Raise the Age,
5 and it seems to have little to no information, or the
6 details is kind of where we're getting lost. Site
7 selection is something that came up with several
8 members, and you know, we are concerned that the date
9 is fast approaching, and we need to prepare.
10 However, you know, we don't know what the capital
11 costs are going to be, the expense costs are going to
12 be. So, do you have-- are you going through any
13 process of assessment of what it could potentially
14 be? What will be the fiscal impact that we will have
15 because of Raise the Age?

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, you're
17 absolutely right. There's-- as I said in my
18 testimony, at this point we have a lack of clarity
19 for a couple reasons. One is that the two state
20 agencies that will be overseeing our implementation,
21 the Office of Children and Family Services and the
22 State Commission of Correction, they will be issuing
23 regulations that govern all of the facilities in
24 which we will be placing young people. All the
25 facilities will be developing for young people. We

3 don't have those regulations yet. We don't even have
4 draft regulations yet. So we don't know what the
5 structure is that the state is going to impose upon
6 us. So that's obviously a very significant
7 consideration, and we're in conversation with the
8 State. We certainly have expressed to them how
9 important it is that we get that clarity as soon as
10 possible so that we can move our planning process
11 forward. The other thing that we're doing, and this
12 is something we can do, but it's more complicated
13 than it might seem at first blush, and that is to
14 make projections of the number of young people that
15 we will have to prepare for in each of the gradations
16 of care. It's more complicated than you might think
17 because it begins, of course, with the current
18 population on Rikers Island of 16 and 17-year-olds.
19 We know what that is, but then we have to look at the
20 dynamics of young people coming into the system, and
21 then because under Raise the Age, once we implement,
22 unlike right now where all those kids go into
23 detention, go into custody, they'll be going into a
24 range of different service options, service models.
25 So we have to project how many of them will go into
detention versus limited secure programs, non-secure

2 programs and community-based alternatives. We're
3 doing that analysis now in collaboration with the
4 Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and Department of
5 Corrections. Once we've completed that analysis,
6 once we have the clarity from the state about the
7 regulatory structure, then it will be much easier for
8 us to say these are the facilities we need, the size
9 of the facilities we need, the capacity, and then to
10 do the budget projections.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And can
12 you please make sure that you engage the Council so
13 that we understand, you know, what the impact will
14 be, the cost. Also, site selection, I believe it was
15 the Chief of Staff to the DOC Commissioner who had
16 stated there were facilities that are currently city-
17 owned that you're looking at to potentially move the
18 population to that space, but even those spaces have
19 their own challenges, and many need to have capital
20 investments which because of the timeline might end
21 up being capital and expense investments. So, it
22 just seems that it's a very short timeline to do a
23 lot and to also not have the cost of us concerning.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's concerning to
25 us as well. The timeline is very, very aggressive

2 for a change of this magnitude, and as I said, the
3 costs are uncertain but we know that they're going to
4 be very, very substantial, and that's why it's so
5 important that the state, you know, come up to the
6 plate and share them with us, but we'll certainly
7 share the information. As we get more clarity we'll
8 certainly share with the Council.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Now, is
10 there a deadline for regulations? Do they have to
11 have regulations out by a certain date?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I don't believe.
13 I don't believe there is. I--

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
15 [interposing] Can you just turn on the mic, state
16 your name for the record, and then you can answer
17 [sic].

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Felipe
19 Franco, Deputy Commissioner for Division of Youth and
20 Family Justice. And as our Commissioner stated,
21 there's no clarity of the regulation, the scope and
22 when it will be done.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So, we
24 just had the date when young people need to be off--

2 when the population needs to be moved. That's all--
3 what do you have? Right?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, what we know
5 is that the population of young people 16 and 17
6 years old have to be moved off Rikers Island by
7 October of 2018, that though the 16 year olds will
8 transition from the adult system to the juvenile
9 system in the same date, October 2018, and young
10 people age 17 will transition October 2019. Those
11 dates are fixed, but the regulatory structure-- and
12 we know-- I should say also we know under the
13 legislation that we have to create a new category of
14 facilities called Specialized Secure Juvenile
15 Detention Facilities into which many of those young
16 people will be placed, but it's what-- that doesn't
17 exist now. Those facilities don't exist. There's no
18 such thing. They will be defined by the state
19 regulations that we're waiting for.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I
21 wanted to actually go and talk about the
22 advertisement that you showed. I mean, we all got
23 goosebumps. I know our Chair who's expecting her
24 baby very soon, you know, these are all concerns for
25 us as new moms, because the reality is that in many

2 homes-- and I'm going to speak about my district in
3 particular-- many families don't have the luxury of a
4 crib. We assume that people, that everyone has a
5 crib, but we have challenges with spaces. We have
6 families that are living in rooms or in-- and just in
7 spaces that one doesn't allow them to have a crib or
8 they can't afford a crib. And we've done research
9 and would like to know what-- if you've heard about
10 the "Baby Box" which is kind of what you can place on
11 a bed, and it has helped address-- I think
12 Philadelphia was one of the cities that implemented
13 this, and New Jersey. So, have you done any follow-
14 up? I'm not saying that-- I think the commercial is
15 thoughtful and right, but I know that you're
16 investing a lot of money in this campaign. That's
17 great for moms that have an opportunity to have their
18 children in cribs, but the reality is I think there's
19 a lot of New Yorkers that don't have that as an
20 advantage, and this "Baby Box" would essentially
21 provide them very similar safety.

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, we do
23 actually-- we are able to provide an alternative to
24 that which we call "Pack and Plays," which we-- when
25 our CPS workers are in a home and they identify a

2 need that the family doesn't have a safe, secure
3 place for a baby to sleep, they can provide that and
4 they do provide that. So we do have the ability to
5 do that. You know, one of the things we've learned--
6 obviously, there have been campaigns around safe
7 sleep before. This is not the first by any means.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: And one of the
10 things we've learned is that it's one thing for
11 people to know and it's another thing when people act
12 on the information, and that's why we think it's so
13 important and we're framing this campaign around
14 places where we actually think information will
15 really register with new parents, hospitals, birthing
16 centers, maternity wards, as I mentioned, and also
17 why the video that I showed you is something that our
18 CPS workers couldn't do this before because they
19 didn't have internet access on their phones. They now
20 can. They can play it for a parent in the home when
21 they realize that the parent has a need for that
22 information.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And you
24 said CPS workers, what if it's families that are not
25 necessarily known by CPS?

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Our preventive
3 agencies can do the same thing, have the same
4 [inaudible].

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: By
6 providing the pack and play? Yes?

7 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: And cribs as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Pack and
9 play and cribs?

10 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: And cribs.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. I
12 have-- would you like to add anything? Okay. I have
13 a question on the, I guess the tablet that you said
14 that certain workers were going to be able to have.
15 I just got a question from the actual union
16 representative of the workforce. Have you been
17 engaging with them on being able to use this tablet
18 or what the challenges could present itself, or?

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We have begun to,
20 and we're going to involve the union in the pilot. I
21 want to say just a little background do that. I
22 mentioned in my testimony, I mentioned in March as
23 well, that I have now shadowed two CPS teams. And
24 the first time I did it, I went out with a nighttime
25 team, our Emergency Children Services Team, that was

2 part of the pilot of the tablets, and I watched them
3 use it, and I asked them, "How did you do this work
4 before you had a tablet?" And they told me that they
5 weren't sure how they did it, that the tablet was
6 absolutely essential. And I watched them in the
7 field as we went from home to home to home, because
8 cases were being called in literally as we were in
9 the car driving, and they were getting case
10 information, downloading on the tablet in a way you
11 just really can't do on a phone, and they were able
12 to upload case notes as well. So, all of the
13 engagement that I've had with our frontline CPS staff
14 has for me reinforced the notion that the tablets
15 will be a very valuable tool for them. However, we
16 want to make sure that it's one that is as user-
17 friendly as possible that will have the capabilities
18 that they need. So, that's why we're doing a three-
19 month pilot. That's why we're going to try out a few
20 different models, and we will absolutely engage the
21 union in that process.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. And
23 I wanted to ask a question on overtime, and then I'm
24 going to open it up to my Co-Chair-- Co-Chairs to ask
25 their questions. New York City contracts with over

2 90,000 workers to provide essential services. Many
3 of these positions are low-wage, time intensive, and
4 overall demanding. Recently, the State Department of
5 Labor increased the overtime threshold salary to
6 47,476. While the increase in overtime threshold is
7 much needed to support contracted workers, there may
8 be some unintended consequences from a budgetary
9 perspective in many cases. Given the new overtime
10 regulations, how much does ACS anticipate in paying
11 overtime costs for Fiscal Year 2018?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's a good
13 question. We don't know the answer to that yet, and
14 one of the things that I referred to in my testimony
15 was the process we're going to be going through with
16 our preventive providers to look at the contracts,
17 develop a model contract, and then see where we need
18 to make modifications to address financial strains
19 the providers are under. This is one of the issues
20 we'll be looking at.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay. So
22 there's-- since you're still looking at this, I think
23 there is also a moment where because of the overtime
24 or the demand that work-- the amount of hours that
25 workers are going to be putting in, this could

2 potentially unintendedly put workers at a point where
3 they actually will make more than their supervisors
4 because of the hours that need to be covered by the
5 overtime. So, I'd like to kind of hear your
6 thoughts. I know that you don't have it right now,
7 but as a follow-up on how you address that. Do
8 supervisors, you know, does the overtime impact the
9 supervisors' work, or what? You know, what's the
10 relationship or how do you analyze or mitigate the
11 overtime costs in your agency?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: And we can get
13 back to you with more detail on that, but the concern
14 you're raising is a significant one in two regards.
15 One is of course we don't want staff to have to work
16 overtime.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: The goal is to
19 have them work standard hours and that's the
20 expectation. Because of the increased number of
21 reports and investigations we've been doing for the
22 last six months or so as a result of the incidents
23 last fall, overtime has gone up. We hope to bring it
24 back down again as we can bring the caseload down.
25 So that's our goal is to get back to the point where

2 overtime isn't as much as an expectation as it is
3 today. And your other point is well-taken, too,
4 which is obviously we want staff to have a career
5 path in which moving from frontline to supervisors to
6 manager also involves compensation increases. That's
7 important. So those are factors that are very much
8 on our front burner as we look at the patterns here.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: and I
10 think that, you know, that's reflective when you say
11 that you went out there and you've been with the
12 workers hearing their concerns, and a lot of this has
13 to do with morale, and making sure that our municipal
14 labor force isn't burnt out. This is a very intense
15 job, an intense role, but I believe that as
16 Commissioner you would want to make sure that your
17 staff and your team is not burnt out and not
18 overburdened. So, you know, some of these
19 recommendations I got to believe they may come back
20 and say, "Hey, you need to expand your workforce."
21 But we have a Mayor who has expressed that we-- as a
22 savings plan, that we should be doing a hiring freeze
23 of management and administrative staff. So that
24 could potentially be an impact in your agency. So,
25 you know, has the-- have you heard from OMB based on

2 these recommendations? Has your agency recommended
3 cases for savings on the management and
4 administrative site already?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, let me say a
6 few things, because I absolutely agree morale of our
7 CPS staff is as high a priority we have in the agency
8 right now. There are a number of things we're doing
9 about it. We are hiring. We are hiring in advance
10 of attrition because our attrition rate has been
11 high. I'm hoping we'll bring it down by improving
12 morale, but in the meantime we have to hire at a
13 rapid pace, and we have hired 700 more staff since
14 February of last year. Some of the other things that
15 I referred to in the testimony like improving
16 technology tools, training, things like that I think
17 will also help. I want staff to feel like they're
18 supported in the work that they're doing. It's also
19 why I'm spending so much time on the front line,
20 because I think it's important that they, you know,
21 hear from leadership how valued they are and how
22 respected the work they do is. That's how-- it's
23 only the beginning. There's much more we need to do
24 to show support for staff. We're developing some
25 much more, frankly, ambitious and comprehensive

2 plans. As I alluded to in the testimony, my hope is
3 that we'll be able to discuss them with you. Some of
4 them have resource implications, some don't, but I
5 hope the ones that do will be able to discuss with
6 you in advance of completion of the budget this year.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

8 Commissioner--

9 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] With
10 regard to-- let me just say--

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:

12 [interposing] Yes, go ahead.

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Regard to the
14 hiring freeze, though, I want to assure you, and it
15 was extremely important to me that I received
16 assurance for OMB that frontline staff like our CPS
17 staff will be exempt from the hiring freeze.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And that
19 includes the management position of frontline staff?

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I believe that
21 will be the case.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay.
23 Well I hope so, because that would be something that
24 we would recommend. But I think there's no better
25 savings than us being able to put a start and end

2 date to the monitoring, especially the monitoring
3 agency that's costing us 550 dollars an hour per
4 person. I think that it is incredibly irresponsible
5 in an agency that we can be investing every taxpayer
6 dollar in protecting young people that we're paying--
7 essentially we have no idea. There's no end to this
8 expense. That is where we should be starting the
9 savings program and the recommendation. If you feel
10 that the monitor is necessary and the city has
11 already agreed, then part of that contract should
12 have an end date, and we should be able to say by
13 this date we will have a report or an assessment of
14 what this monitor is alluding to, especially since
15 there's several agents or other agents that are doing
16 it are consultants that are doing it for absolutely
17 free. We will now hear from Chair Levin followed by
18 Chair Cumbo.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
20 Chair Ferreras-Copeland. Commissioner, thank you
21 very much for your testimony. I think that you came
22 close to the record for longest testimony, but also
23 Steve Banks in front of my Committee--

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [off mic]
25 He was only 17 pages.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Seventeen single-
4 spaced.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: For the record,
6 Commissioner Banks and I are not in competition with
7 each other.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I keep-- I keep tabs
9 on the Banks' testimony. But no, I greatly
10 appreciate it, and I think it's a testament to the
11 amount of work that you've put into your job as since
12 taking over as Commissioner and so we greatly
13 appreciate the level of attention that-- and also
14 working on initiatives as it relates to the FY18
15 budget in terms of new needs. I have-- these are all
16 things that I've heard from providers about. So,
17 that's-- it's good that it's matching up. What I'm
18 hearing is what you're hearing, is what ACS is
19 implementing, so that's good.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: See, I wanted to ask-
22 - I'll ask a few questions, but in light of the fact
23 that we have two additional Chairs here and a lot to
24 cover, I'll keep my questions brief here. With
25 regard to the coaches working with CPS workers

2 through the Workforce Institute, the 24 coaches, how
3 is that new need conceived, and where-- how is--
4 which recommendations does that come from?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It didn't come
6 directly from any of the outside consultant
7 recommendations. I guess, indirectly you might say
8 it did, because they certainly talked about
9 compliance with protocols and practices. But it
10 really came more from internal assessment, including
11 frankly from my observation in the field. One of the
12 things I heard from the CPS staff was, you know-- and
13 we all know this I think a little bit from going to
14 school. You go to school. You take academic
15 classes. You get in the real world; things are
16 different. And some of the CPS spoke to, and this
17 was confirmed by talking with my management team was
18 that it ws really critical that we make sure that
19 what our new CPS workers were learning in the academy
20 was carrying over into the field and there wasn't a
21 break between, you know, teaching and practice. So
22 it was really an internally generated concept to
23 extend the work from the academy and the discipline
24 in a sense from the academy into the Child Protective
25 Officer. So, the coaches will be working, as I said,

2 directly with manager supervisors kind of around how
3 to continue to coach their frontline staff about the
4 practices that they've just spent six months or so
5 learning as they go through their initial training
6 period.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And so the funding
8 for that, for those, for that program will be
9 reflected in the FY18 budget?

10 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's in the
11 Executive Budget. It's 2.3 million in the Executive
12 Budget.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. There's a new
14 need of six million dollars to increase the number of
15 staffing at the Children's Center, and 15, creating
16 15 new additional beds in the Bronx. What is the
17 current census of the Children's Center now, and are
18 you seeing an increase? I mean, is this addressing
19 an increase that you're seeing that is a long-term
20 increase or was-- is it responding to the fact that
21 there was a spike over the fall that's now
22 stabilized, or are you addressing kind of longer with
23 that additional staff, longer deficient-- longer term
24 deficiencies in kind of the programmatic services?

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: That's a great set
3 of questions, and it's one actually that's been very
4 much on my mind since I've been in this role. So,
5 first of all, the census of the Children's Center
6 fluctuates up and down. So, a point-in-time number
7 isn't all that helpful, but it has recently been
8 higher than it had been previously and then we would
9 like it to be, and I think it is partly a reflection
10 of what we've seen since last fall, an increase in
11 investigations. The funding actually in the budget
12 is for temp staff. It's not for permanent staff. We
13 actually over the last year or so had made a big
14 investment in permanent staff, especially medical and
15 mental health staff, because we want to have fulltime
16 ACS professionals in the Children's Center, and we
17 have them. But we also have to make sure that as the
18 census fluctuates we have enough staff that we can
19 bring on to maintain the right kind of staff to child
20 ratio. So, the funding in the budget is actually for
21 temp staff to give us elasticity as the census
22 fluctuates. While I do hope that over the long term
23 as the, you know, reports and investigations I hope,
24 you know, tail back down again to more normal levels,
25 that will have an impact on the census of the

2 Children's Center, but we're not counting on that.

3 So we're doing a lot more to bring this census down.

4 Our goal is in the situations where we have to remove

5 children to have them go directly into a foster

6 placement or a kind placement, not to go through the

7 Children's Center. We can't always do that.

8 Sometimes there isn't a placement immediately

9 available. So we're doing a lot of work with our

10 foster care agencies to expand the pool of foster

11 care placements so that as much as possible children

12 don't have to transition to the Children's Center, or

13 where they do that they're there for a short of

14 period of time as possible. And we're also-- you

15 alluded to the new Children's Annex that we're going

16 to be opening in the Bronx in June or July, that will

17 also provide some backup. So, our goal is to try to

18 get the census down to a more stable level and keep

19 it there, but we have to make sure we have the

20 staffing flexibility to meet the need when it does go

21 higher.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You said in your

23 testimony, you spoke about the Casey Foundation

24 recommendations that have-- that you've just received

25 and in the process of implementing. Are those

2 recommendations going to be made public, and what's
3 the timeline for that?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, we will be--
5 we, just as I said, just got them last week. We're
6 still reviewing them, but yes, our plan is to make
7 them public very soon.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to
9 preventive services, is there a long-- are you
10 looking long-term at, you know, for lack of a better
11 word, right sizing those contracts as it pertains to
12 salaries and benefits. One of the things that we've
13 heard from preventive, from you know, the preventive
14 providers is that-- and we learned that from our
15 hearing last year was that there's-- there's a long-
16 term challenge that preventive providers have of
17 being able to retain staff. There's a morale issue
18 at-- which child protective workers, and that-- those
19 are ACS staff, unionized staff, certain set of
20 benefits, subject to collective bargaining, so on and
21 so forth. Preventive case workers are often a
22 Bachelor's Degree, a fraction of the amount of
23 training, a fraction of the amount of job protection
24 and benefits and so on and so forth. They may not be
25 unionized, and as a result, you know, salary starts

2 at I think it's 38,000 dollars a year. It's really
3 hard to retain staff in that environment. Are you
4 looking at-- I mean, obviously there's thousands of
5 preventive workers throughout the agencies, but
6 they're doing the work. As I said to Commissioner
7 Banks, they're doing the work that we can't do. We
8 don't have the resources to do on our own. We rely
9 on our not-for-profit partners, and if they, you
10 know, go under, you know, we can't do that. We
11 can't-- we don't have the wherewithal to do all that
12 work, nor could we do it in anywhere near the budget
13 that they do it because of all of the just good
14 effective [sic] bargaining rules and salary
15 requirements. So, can you speak to that a little
16 bit?

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, yeah. So, I
18 have certainly heard since my first day in this job
19 as obviously you have about the concerns that you
20 raised about the financial issues in the preventive
21 contracts, and we're addressing it I guess in a
22 series of iterations. The first, of course, are the
23 investments that are in the Executive Budget, and
24 those respond to two of the foremost concerns that I
25 and we had heard raised by the providers, which was

2 the issue essentially of-- you really could call them
3 unfunded mandates that we'd placed them. One was
4 increased conference facilitation as a result of some
5 of the reforms we've implemented in response to last
6 fall, important ones, but put more burden on them to
7 facilitate conferences without funding for that.
8 And the other was opening up the potential for them
9 to have their staff trained in our Workforce
10 Institute, but without funding them to do that. So,
11 those unfunded mandates will now become funded, and I
12 think that will be a very significant change. The
13 next step is the process we plan to embark on
14 immediately which is developing this model contract
15 and then looking at what I think you're referring to
16 which is some of the more structural problems in the
17 contracts that create problems with their ability to
18 staff up, to retain staff, and then to meet their
19 full, you know, capacity obligations under the
20 contracts. So over the next few months we will be
21 working with both internally and with the providers
22 and with OMB to identify those structural problems
23 and figure out how we can respond to them. So that's
24 really-- that's the process we'll be engaged in for
25 the next few months. Longer term, although this

2 seems far away, but it's actually not that far away,
3 these contracts basically run until the fall of 2020,
4 about three years, a little over three years from
5 now. So we'll actually begin pretty soon the process
6 of thinking about what the next iteration of
7 preventive contracts should look like, and we'll take
8 into consideration what we've learned about the
9 models and what has worked and what hasn't worked in
10 developing the next iteration of the program.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, I mean, I had
12 my last not-for-profit 10 years ago, or 10 and a half
13 years ago, and my final-- you know, my salary was
14 38,000 dollars a year. That was 2006, which is not--
15 you're not able to continue to live in New York City
16 with inflation being what it is and cost of housing,
17 cost of food, and cost of everything being what it
18 is, you know, on a salary like that. And so there's
19 no wonder that they can't stay in that job. Just
20 quickly following up on what Chair Ferreras-Copeland
21 mentioned about the "Baby Box." I think one of the
22 positive attributes to that model is that it's, you
23 know, very cost-effective. You know, I think it's
24 certainly something that we should be looking beyond
25 just the families that are interacting with ACS,

2 either with CPS or with preventive. I would love to
3 see ACS working Health + Hospitals Corporation on
4 doing something that's-- you know, you could
5 probably, you know, buy about 10 Baby Boxes for oen
6 pack and play. So, I think it's very, very cost
7 effective, and it's, you know, as Chair Ferreras-
8 Copeland said, used in New Jersey and it's used in
9 Europe, and I think it's very-- it's something that
10 we should be-- I would love to see-- like, I just had
11 a baby, and one thing that I noticed was at all of
12 our prenatal visits there's tremendous opportunities
13 to engage with first-time parents on-- at the
14 Doctor's Office. So if you're going to a prenatal
15 visit, you have the parents there. There should be--
16 there should be that-- continue to be an increased
17 effort on reaching out to those parent when they're
18 at the hospital, when they're at the care providers,
19 and establishing those languages up front.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah. No, I
21 totally agree--

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Sorry,
23 my wife had the baby. Council Member Cabrera just
24 reminded me that I didn't have the baby, my wife had
25 the baby.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes, that's true,
3 but she is adorable. I've seen the--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Thank
5 you. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: No, I think it's a
7 very important issue. I will say, you know, I've
8 begun discussion with Commissioner Bassett on a
9 number of issues including this one. I will say, and
10 I am certainly not the expert on this, and I would
11 defer to her absolutely. There are some concerns
12 about the "Baby Box." It's not approved by the
13 American Pediatric Association. There are
14 alternatives. I think we, you know, we owe it to the
15 city to make sure we're exploring all the
16 alternatives, but in principle, absolutely it's
17 something we should make available wherever we can
18 and whenever parents need them, and that's something
19 that will be working with DOHMH and H+H on.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. And then
21 lately before I turn it over to my colleagues. I
22 want to ask about childcare vouchers. This has been
23 a long story with childcare vouchers: mandated
24 vouchers, non-mandated vouchers. Going back since
25 I've entered the Council in 2010, the Bloomberg

2 Administration did away with Priority Seven vouchers
3 back in 2011/2012, and those were non-mandated
4 vouchers; continued to cut into Priority Five
5 vouchers, which are also non-mandated vouchers. That
6 census decreased year over year. The de Blasio
7 Administration developed the program of the Special
8 Child Care Funds, the SCCF, which are funded with the
9 Council's funding as well to about 17 million
10 dollars. I guess the first question is, is that
11 fully funded? I mean, is that being fully utilized?
12 Because last year there was an issue of some funds
13 being left on the table, because there was I think
14 some lead-in time over FY16, and so all the funds
15 weren't drawn down, but during FY17 my understanding
16 is that all the funds are being utilized is that
17 correct?

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes, that's
19 correct. That's correct.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That being said, that
21 caps out, because it's a finite-- you know, it's a
22 finite amount of funds at around 1,700 vouchers.
23 However, those families that have a Priority Five
24 voucher as that child ages-- as every child ages out,
25 my understanding and just tell me if this is-- if I'm

2 incorrect here, that a new Priority Five voucher is
3 not issued every time a child ages out of Priority
4 Five, is that right?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes. That is
6 correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, then, am I
8 correct in understanding that the Priority Five
9 census will continue to decrease as children continue
10 to age out of that program?

11 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: The--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] And if
13 you could identify yourself for the record, please.

14 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Let the expert in.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: Yeah, that
16 is, that is correct. Oh, I'm sorry. Lorelei Vargas,
17 Deputy Commissioner for Early Care and Education.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, if in, you know,
19 at the start of the de Blasio Administration there
20 was-- and I don't know the exact number, so I'll just
21 throw this out there, that there was roughly 10,000
22 Priority Five vouchers, and as that number year after
23 year decreases because children continue to age out
24 of, you know, they age-- when they turn 13 they age
25 out of that voucher. While the SCCF vouchers, I am

2 thankful that they're there, that's a finite number
3 fixed under the current funding, 1,700, the number
4 will continue to go down from that say 10,000 that it
5 was originally at in the begging of 2014.
6 Eventually, that is not a-- it's not a one-to-one
7 replacement. It really only meets about 20 percent
8 of the universe of children and families that were
9 served back in 2014. So, I'm just wondering whether
10 conceptually-- and I think that we don't have the
11 exact numbers here, so it's hard to speak
12 specifically, but I think conceptually, am I correct
13 in saying that basically we have a decreasing
14 universe of children and families that is being
15 supplanted by a finite amount of about 1,700
16 vouchers. .

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8 served back in 2014. So, I'm just wondering whether
9 conceptually-- and I think that we don't have the
10 exact numbers here, so it's hard to speak
11 specifically, but I think conceptually, am I correct
12 in saying that basically we have a decreasing
13 universe of children and families that is being
14 supplanted by a finite amount of about 1,700
15 vouchers.

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, and the
17 underlying factor has to do with the cost of care,
18 right? So there are different, as you know,
19 different levels of-- different categories of
20 vouchers. Families in some cases tend to choose more
21 expensive levels of care. So, obviously if we have
22 more families in a more expensive level of voucher
23 care, that means there'll be overall-- with a fixed
24 amount of funding, fewer families over time that are
25 served.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. But I think
3 that the concern that I have is that, you know, there
4 has essentially been a policy decision to continue
5 the Bloomberg Administration policy of not renewing a
6 Priority Five voucher every time a child ages out.
7 In other words, that that number is going to continue
8 to decrease over time as it's naturally-- you know,
9 attrition of those vouchers. That was a Bloomberg
10 Administration policy, and I understand that there's
11 a deficit in the overall childcare block grant
12 funding of vouchers. So, I don't necessarily agree
13 with the rationale, but I understand what the
14 rationale is. But over time, that 1,700 is not going
15 to continue to meet that need, and these are
16 communities-- there are families across the City that
17 might not be in poverty but are at near poverty,
18 might not qualify for public assistance, but come
19 very close to qualifying for public assistance.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, no, I-- I
21 think the underlying structural problem, and I think
22 you alluded to it, is that the funding stream for
23 these vouchers, the child care development block
24 grant has not increased, but the mandated market rate
25 for most of the voucher programs has gone up. So,

2 obviously if you have a fixed amount of money and the
3 cost per child goes up, you're going to fund fewer
4 children, but the state hasn't increased the funding
5 provided to the City. The Mayor has-- I mean, I
6 think, and I certainly take no credit for this
7 because it was before my time, but the Mayor I think
8 deserves great credit for it, the Mayor has provided
9 more city funding for child care than I think any
10 previous mayor, and as you know, he has baselined of
11 the 17 million for the Special Child Care Funding
12 program. The Mayor has baselined 12.4 million of
13 that matched by the Council's 4.6. So, that's an
14 investment the City has made that it had not been
15 making previously. One can certainly argue about
16 what the right level is, and you know, it's a
17 conversation I think that we're interested in having
18 with the Council again in the near future between now
19 and the adoption to see whether in fact it makes
20 sense to change that level invested by the City.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Between now and
22 adoption?

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And my last question,
3 do we leave any child care block grant funding on the
4 table, or is all of it drawn down?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, no. it is
6 all drawn down, and I might add, I should have
7 mentioned this as well, that actually in the current
8 state budget the state cut the City by about 3.8
9 million dollars which the Mayor has backfilled. So,
10 actually the City contribution is now four million
11 dollars, even more than it was last year in CTL.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that-- the amount
13 of block grant funding is set by the state, not by
14 the feds.

15 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: The state-- well,
16 the feds give the state an allocation. The state
17 then subdivides it among the county, the social
18 services districts across the state, their share.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do you know if the
20 State leaves any funds on the table?

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We don't know.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: City certainly does
23 not.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: City certainly
25 does not.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Okay. Thank
3 you very much. I'll turn it back over to my Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
5 you, Chair. We will now hear from Chair Cumbo
6 followed by Chair Cabrera. Well, we'll hear from
7 Chair Cabrera and then we'll hear from Chair Cumbo.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you to my Co-
9 Chairs. Commissioner, welcome, and I want to commend
10 you on the vast amount of work that you have
11 performed literally in the few weeks that you've been
12 here. It's just pretty amazing. You have been able
13 to-- and I know you come with a vast amount of
14 experience, and to just get in the groundwork and to
15 become very familiarized especially the frontline
16 workforce is impressive. I want to talk to you
17 about, and we both, you know, we rejoice in the
18 passing and the signing of the Raise the Age
19 legislation. Regarding the site, I know that was
20 mentioned already, I'm very concerned that we're not
21 going to get there on time. I know this-- let me
22 start with the feasibility study. Do you know when
23 that's coming out? Because I know it was due this
24 spring.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Right. And we
3 talked about a little bit in March. The issue
4 frankly is the world has changed dramatically since
5 March because of Raise the Age. So what we were
6 modeling and examining in the feasibility study was
7 what we expected pre-Raise the Age which was that of
8 our two juvenile detention facilities, one of them,
9 Horizons, would ultimately transfer to the Department
10 of Corrections, and the other would serve our
11 consolidated population. With Raise the Age, because
12 those young people will be leaving Rikers and many
13 moving into our custody, that no longer makes sense.
14 So we have to rethink the plan for our two detention
15 facilities.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, wait a second.
17 That's the part I don't understand. If the 16 and 17
18 years olds, why can't they go to Brooklyn? Why can't
19 get they go to Crossroads? And--

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] They
21 can. They can, but they will be coming into juvenile
22 custody--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing]
24 Right.
25

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: between 2018 and
3 2019--

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Got
5 it.

6 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: rather than
7 remaining in the adult--

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] So
9 can't we, instead of looking to another facilities
10 and spending all these monies that I don't even know
11 has it been allocated? I don't know if anybody asked
12 that question. How we have funding allocated from
13 the City in anticipation of this, and I know we
14 don't-- we have no idea what the state is going to
15 give us.

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes. There is 170
17 million dollars in capital money allocated in the
18 Executive Budget.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's outside of
20 the 300 million that was going to be used to renovate
21 crossroads, or is that part of it?

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: That was--

23 UNIDENTIFIED: That is on top of what is
24 our capital budget for that, which was less than 300.
25 I'm going to [inaudible]

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, why can't we
3 take that funding and start working on it, 24/07, you
4 know, just have work happen 24/7 instead of nine to
5 five construction. You don't have to build
6 foundation. You don't have to build, you know, a
7 brand new building. Renovate that building. We def-
8 - I mean, with that kind of funding we could
9 definitely finish by October of next year. Why not
10 do it that way instead of looking to other possible
11 sites.

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, we're
13 exploring a whole range of options, and we're looking
14 at our existing facilities. We're looking at other
15 city-owned facilities around the five boroughs, and
16 we will absolutely-- we're going to do it in the most
17 expeditious way that we can. Construction in New
18 York City takes time. So we have to make sure. We
19 do have these very tight timeline mandates we have to
20 meet, and we have to make sure that we meet them.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, because I know
22 you're waiting on the state, but those regulations
23 are probably-- probably it's not going to be too
24 different what we're doing with those who are under
25 the age of 16, right? I mean, so if we could use

2 that as a model, I would imagine those under 15, you
3 have stricter rules, you know, higher demand, or
4 might even be the same, but I don't foresee it's
5 going to be higher than that. So why not use that
6 model anticipation and start working toward that end?

7 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, I'll let
8 Deputy Commissioner Franco elaborate. Let me just
9 say we're not waiting by any means. We are, as I
10 said, we already have an inner-city planning group
11 meeting once a week. We have an internal ACS planning
12 group meeting once a week. We're moving forward.
13 We're not waiting on the state. The problem is that
14 the legislation requires this new category of co-
15 managed facilities called Specialized Secure Juvenile
16 Detention, and we just don't know yet specifically
17 what the mix of responsibility between ACS and DOC is
18 going to be for those.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Have they asked you
20 in the state for advice of--

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] we
22 have indicated to them we'd like to give them advice,
23 and they have indicated they're receptive to it. So,
24 we are giving them advice, yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, so you--

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing]

3 Doesn't mean they'll take it, but we're going to give
4 it to them.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. So you
6 already began to give them advice--

7 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: as to what-- I
9 mean, you're going to be doing the work.

10 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We have, and
11 obviously New York City is going to be affected by
12 this on a scale unlike any other part of the state.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Exactly.

14 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, yes, we are
15 already giving our input to the state.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I know you wanted
17 Deputy Commissioner--

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Yeah, I
19 think the Commissioner answered it perfectly well. I
20 mean, Chair Cabrera, those challenge is that actually
21 you have a set of regulations like the State
22 Commission of Corrections that actually were
23 developed to be managing jails across the State of
24 New York, and then you have the set of regulations
25 that were developed by the Office of Children and

2 Family Services. Having been in the lucky position
3 of running facilities in the state by under both
4 different set of regulations, they're very different.
5 So, for example, the State Commission of Corrections
6 has a very correctional feel to it. You need a
7 certain type of walls. You actually need wet [sic]
8 room for actually they have toilets in the
9 individuals rooms or cells like they call them.
10 That's very different to the facilities that you have
11 visited that I run--

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Right.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: where we
14 actually, you know, want to have a living environment
15 where young people come together and they don't have
16 rooms in there. They don't have bathrooms in their
17 rooms.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And they have not--
19 the state has not communicated at all. I know this
20 question was asked before. To give me a little, at
21 the very least, a hint of when they're going to give
22 you, you know, some direction here. I mean, it just
23 baffles me.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It is surprising.
25 They have not. I have spoken actually to the state

2 OCFS Commissioners recently as last week. It is, you
3 know, quite honestly in fairness to them, you know,
4 this is a whole new working partnership for them as
5 well, between the State Commission on Correction and
6 OCFS. So, they're figuring out between them as well,
7 but no, they have not. And the truth is, it would be
8 risky for us to proceed based on hints. We really
9 need regulations to know that we can proceed in the
10 way that will be lawful.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And I know that the
12 legislation just got passed, but I mean, they've been
13 looking at this for the last three years. In the last
14 three years it was anticipated every year that it was
15 going to pass. So, they had, you know-- you're being
16 very nice to your colleague at the state level. They
17 already knew this was coming down, and I would urge
18 really the state to get moving here quickly because
19 honestly, you know, I know a bit about a
20 construction, and construction, as you say, it takes
21 time. Let me ask a question. Which facility are you
22 leaning towards as of today?

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's really
24 premature to say that. Well, share-- you know, once
25 we have a better analysis we'll share it with you. I

2 do have-- I do have the budget numbers for you that
3 you asked.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, please.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Let me give you
6 those. So, the 170 million I referred to is in
7 addition to the money that had previously allocated
8 for the Crossroads and Horizons renovation. So the
9 total funding, capital funding in the budget, is now
10 329 million for the entire project.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And how much are
12 you asking the state to come in and help us with?

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We haven't made a
14 specific ask, but we will, you know, once we have a
15 budget we'll look at the differential.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: What would you like
17 to see?

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Don't-- until we
19 really have concrete budget productions, we can't
20 say.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You know I was going
22 to ask. I have to ask. My last question here is in
23 regards to additional staff to be hired, youth, to
24 address the youth on staff assault injury rate. Are
25 you planning to hire more staff, maintain, reduce

2 staff? Are we going to have a different approach?

3 Any new techniques, strategies, tactics?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We are planning to
5 hire more staff. I'll let Deputy Commissioner Franco
6 respond to the question.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: Thank you
8 for the question, Cabrera. I think as we have talked
9 about today, we struggle also in the juvenile justice
10 system to retain staff. It's a really difficult job,
11 and most folks have to be spending sometimes mandated
12 overtime away from their families by taking care of
13 other children. So, with that in mind, you know, the
14 Commissioner and the City essentially invested in
15 hiring 100 more juvenile counselors. So we're
16 actually in the process of actually calling them
17 through our civil service list, identifying
18 [inaudible] soon to open a training academy.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: How many? How many
20 counselors?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: One hundred.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: One?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: One hundred.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oh, 100 extra.

25 That's pretty amazing.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: And I will say
3 these are also frontline staff who would be exempt
4 from the hiring freeze.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That is great.
6 That is great. Just an aside note here, Commissioner
7 I know you just got here a couple of months ago so I
8 have to ask this question. Is the strategy of using
9 pepper spray is something that you're going to not
10 accept in the detention centers, or as a strategy
11 whenever there's an incident? Have you--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: I mean, we
13 don't see a need to use pepper spray. We don't use it
14 in detention. We actually are investing a
15 significant amount of money on training in safe
16 crisis management and actually in replicating some of
17 the work developed by the Missouri [sic] Youth
18 Services Institute. We believe that actually by
19 providing young people with the skills to regulate
20 their emotions or behavior, we don't just help them
21 to behave well in the facility, but we help them to
22 behave when they go back home.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, we haven't used
24 it since that last hearing?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FRANCO: We haven't.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's great. I'm
3 happy, very happy to hear that. I'm very happy to
4 hear that. With that I'm going to--

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
6 [interposing] Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: give it back to our
8 Co-Chair. [inaudible]

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
10 you, Chair. We will now hear from Public Advocate
11 Cumbo. We've been joined by Council Member Mealy.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So, Council
13 Member Cumbo will be back shortly. So, what-- you
14 called me Council Member Public Advocate Cumbo.
15 That's okay. I'll be all of those things.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Let's get
17 this right for the record.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I'm the Public
19 Advocate, and I'm also am--

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
21 [interposing] Yes, Public Advocate James, please--

22 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: being your
25 questioning.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you so
3 much, but I love Laurie Cumbo, and she'll be back in
4 a minute. So, Commissioner, you know I have always
5 argued that the Administration for Children's
6 Services does so many things for so many people and
7 in so many areas, and I've always thought that the
8 Agency really should be de-compartmentalized. I was,
9 you know, sitting here thinking about all that you
10 do, you know, protective, preventive, foster care,
11 juvenile justice, early childhood education,
12 childcare, and the list goes on and on. So I'm
13 really happy that the Administration saw fit to
14 transfer HeadStart and EarlyLearn to the Department
15 of Education because education is a continuum, and
16 that is something that I had talked about some time
17 ago, and I'm really glad, and I hope that at some
18 point in time we can also parcel off juvenile justice
19 into another agency as well as juvenile justice-- as
20 well as childcare, because I think they need their
21 own individuals bureau and/or department, which is
22 not to say that your agency is not doing a good job,
23 but I just think we need a dedicated focus
24 particularly to childcare, early childhood education,
25 and to childcare in general and juvenile justice in

2 particular, particularly in light of Raise the Age.

3 So, saying all of that, my question is the transition
4 from ACS to DOE for EarlyLearn and for HeadStart. As
5 you know, when I was a City Council Member I was very
6 critical of the previous Administration with regards
7 to EarlyLearn, particularly the RFPs. a number of
8 organizations were not in a position to-- were not
9 successful in getting the RFPs. Other organizations
10 came in and were able to compete for these EarlyLearn
11 RFPs. Some of them unfortunately had no experience
12 with the neighborhoods that they were serving, and a
13 number of smaller community-based organizations that
14 had been involved in childcare closed down, and these
15 were longstanding institutions in a number of
16 communities throughout the City of New York. So my
17 question to you is, what will the transition look
18 like? How can we assist long term organizations
19 compete successfully for some of these RFPs? Are we
20 going to change the awarding process? I took issue
21 with ACS and the way that they gave out points. I
22 seriously questioned the subjective nature to the
23 scoring process. What are we doing to again make
24 sure it's a smooth transition and that more

2 neighborhood-based organizations get-- have access to
3 and are successful in competing for these proposals?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Public Advocate,
5 that's a great set of questions, some of which I can
6 answer now, some of which we'll have to answer as we
7 get more clarity. I can talk about what the
8 transition process will be, and that is that the plan
9 is that the EarlyLearn contracts will transition from
10 ACS to DOE in July of next year. So we have about a
11 14-month transition period, and that was very
12 deliberate, because we realized, as you're
13 suggesting, there are a lot of issues that need to be
14 addressed in that transition. We have begun to work
15 with DOE already. We have a very good collaborative
16 partnership with them, and we're beginning to
17 identify the issues that have to be resolved, and
18 there were certainly things that will happen between
19 now and July of next year before the contracts
20 actually transition. So, DOE will begin, actually
21 very soon if they haven't already, providing some
22 supports to the EarlyLearn programs. They'll be
23 helping with supports in the classroom. They'll be
24 helping us to fill vacant seats in some of the
25 EarlyLearn program sites. They'll be helping with

2 teacher recruitment. So, they'll be engaged from the
3 beginning, but the actual contracts won't transfer
4 until July of next year. That will give us time to
5 work with DOE specifically on the issue that you're
6 raising, which is what will the next procurement look
7 like.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We don't know that
10 yet. The contracts we know, current contracts end in
11 September of next year. So, a procurement will have
12 to be issued before then, and we are beginning the
13 discussions with DOE about what that procurement
14 should look like, and we're sharing with DOE all the
15 experience we've had with the program--

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
17 Right.

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: to help inform that
19 decision.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: My concern,
21 again, under the previous Administration was that the
22 larger organizations that have lawyers, doctors,
23 sciences, architects, engineers were in a position to
24 assist in these RFPs and the smaller based
25 organizations that did have-- that had limited

3 resources and limited access to the expertise
4 unfortunately were left out of the competition, and
5 that had a significant impact again in the district
6 that I formerly represented which is now ably
7 represented by Council Member Laurie Cumbo, but it
8 was not unique to the 35th District. It happened all
9 over the City. And so whatever we can do to address
10 that would be greatly appreciated, because community-
11 based organizations represent the local economy, and
12 they hire, you know, from within, and so it's really
13 critically important that we support them. So,
14 moving on, so it's my understanding, and correct me
15 if I'm wrong, and we've had discussion about this.
16 As you know, previous Administration, I've been
17 critical about Administration for Children's
18 Services. It's no secret. I initiated litigation.
19 I mean, part of it is I argued that there was limited
20 oversight over the day-to-day care of foster children
21 placed with contract agencies. That's what I was
22 advised. That's what I was told, and so is there
23 any-- now that we have new Administration under your
24 leadership, and I have great confidence in your
25 leadership given your experience. Are there going to
be any provisions in the budget that would increase

2 oversight of some of these contract agencies,
3 particularly in the area of foster care?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah. Well, it's
5 certainly something I've looked at closely. We don't
6 have any specific budget proposals yet, but looking
7 at what our accountability and oversight and
8 monitoring mechanisms are. We have a number of them
9 in place. We do monitor them for making sure that
10 their practice is consistent with our requirements,
11 looking at their outcomes, and then looking on a sort
12 of a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual to annual basis
13 at their performance. So, we do absolutely monitor
14 them very closely, but accountability is critical.
15 So, it's certainly on my radar to make sure that we
16 feel like we have the level of accountability that we
17 need.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Any thought as to
19 perhaps providing some financial incentives so that
20 they could meet national norms for reducing caseloads
21 and getting children adopted, and etcetera, etcetera.

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: That's a great
23 question. As I said in my testimony, we are moving
24 in the right direction on all of those, but we still
25 have some challenges with regard to time that some

2 children remain in the system, time to permanency and
3 so on. And so we are looking at ways that we can
4 work with the providers, both to help them improve
5 their business practice, their business process, so
6 that they can do that, and frankly so they can learn
7 from each other. What we see actually when we look
8 at our-- across our, I believe, 25 foster care
9 agencies we actually see quite a range of
10 performance, and so we are structuring a couple of
11 our initiatives-- I talked about No Time to Wait, I
12 talked about Home Away from Home-- in a way that
13 allows them to learn from each other and identify and
14 replicate best practice, but we are actually quite
15 interested in the specific thing you mentioned which
16 is whether we can develop funding mechanisms that
17 will incentivize them to even do better, and that's
18 something that's very much on our radar.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Excellent, and I
20 know that you are very data-driven which is great,
21 and so the question is whether or not we're going to
22 be using technology to improve placements so that we
23 could-- the match between foster parent and the child
24 is a better match using technology?

2 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes, very
3 important priority for us. We have been working
4 with, you know, we have to--

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
6 Sounds like match.com.

7 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's a model.
8 It's a model. You know we are required to use the
9 state's connection system as our Child Welfare Case
10 Management System. So we have been working with the
11 state to develop a module in connections that would
12 allow us to do exactly what you're talking about
13 which is doing-- using technology to better match
14 children in placement. We're making progress with
15 state on that. It's taking some time, but we expect
16 to move forward on that pretty quickly.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And my last
18 question is, you know, as I mentioned to you before,
19 I hear from parents whose children are in foster care
20 about being threatened with removal, that the
21 services that are needed in order for them-- in order
22 for reunification to happen, they're telling me that
23 these services are not available. What are we doing
24 to increase the number of services available to
25 families whose children have been removed, and to

3 perhaps have it more accessible to them in their
4 borough in their community, or?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah. So, I
6 talked in my testimony about the ways in which we are
7 expanding preventive services, and those preventive
8 services are available to families in a range of
9 different settings. They could be families in the
10 setting you're describing where they need to address
11 issues in order to reunify with their children. They
12 may be available to them in increasing number of
13 situations we have now where families-- where
14 children are not removed but the families are placed
15 under supervision of the court often with the
16 requirement that the families participate in
17 services, and sometimes families volunteer for the
18 services. So, we need to meet the need for
19 preventive services in all of those situations, and
20 that's why we're trying to ramp up the capacity. And
21 specifically on the issue, and you've raised this
22 with me before, Public Advocate, around people being
23 able to-- families being able to access services in
24 their boroughs, in their communities. The expansion
25 of staff in our Office of Preventive Referral
Management, one of the specific goals there is to

2 make sure we can better match families with both the
3 level of service they need and in a geographic area
4 that's accessible to them.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And lastly,
6 Commissioner, the campaign Safe Sleep, the public
7 campaign, the public awareness, will there be
8 something similar for children? And again, an issue
9 I have brought up to you in previous Administration
10 with respects to child fatalities at the hands of
11 partner abuse or intimate partners who unfortunately
12 kill too many children.

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, situations
14 like, that domestic violence situations are of great
15 concern to us. I talk in my testimony a bit about
16 the domestic violence taskforce and about the
17 specific services that we're ramping up in order to
18 respond to those situations. They're a great concern
19 for us. It's a very complicated issue, but it's one,
20 again, that we have to respond to in a range of
21 different situations, and we're building in place the
22 resources both internally, and then as I talked about
23 in the testimony, the consultative resources for our
24 preventive providers so they can identify and address
25 domestic violence.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is-- is there
3 also-- is NYPD also involved? Because if there's a
4 number of cases to a particular home for domestic
5 violence, are there any children in the home? Are
6 they high-risk? Can we identify them? Can we flag
7 them? Can we--

8 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing]
9 Absolutely. Absolutely. We-- one of the things that
10 our investigative consultants can do is search NYPD
11 databases to see if there have been domestic violence
12 reports on the home, so we have that information
13 before we go into the home. But also if there is a
14 situation of imminent risk to a partner or to a
15 child, we will engage NYPD immediately.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you,
17 Commissioner.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
19 you. Now we'll hear from Chair Cumbo.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you, I had to
21 take a mommy sustaince [sic] break. Want to jump
22 right in into the EarlyLearn contracts question.
23 This is a huge issue in my district, but also
24 citywide and something that we've been working on for
25 quite some time. Since all EarlyLearn contracts are

2 scheduled to end in September of 2018, and the Mayor
3 recently announced that all EarlyLearn contracts will
4 be transferred to the Department of Education my
5 first question is, was ACS in the process of issuing
6 an RFP for new EarlyLearn contracts? If so, what is
7 the status of the RFP now that EarlyLearn is going
8 over to DOE next year? So many of our providers want
9 to know what is going to be the new status
10 particularly with the RFP as there's been a great
11 change discussed?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, that's a
13 very understandable concern. We had little bit of
14 dialogue about it when you were out of the room. We
15 were not in the process of developing the RFP yet.
16 We were certainly beginning to think about it since
17 September 2018 is not that far away in procurement
18 terms. We are beginning-- although the contracts
19 don't transition until July of 2018 and the contracts
20 end in September, but we are beginning to work with
21 DOE, have actually begun since I've been here a
22 couple months already, to partner with them on
23 thinking through the planning for the next iteration
24 of the contracts. So, one of the issues we're
25 absolutely working with DOE on right now is what that

2 procurement process will be and sharing with them, as
3 I was saying to the Public Advocate, sharing with
4 them the experience we've had under EarlyLearn to
5 help inform what the next iteration of the contracts
6 will be and what the procurement will look like. So
7 we don't have that information now, but as we develop
8 it in collaboration with them, we'll certainly share
9 with-

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Who will
11 be responsible for creating the RFP? Because that's
12 one of the challenges in terms of what the RFP is
13 actually calling for, how it's being evaluated, what
14 are the benchmarks for success? For example,
15 cultural competency and how it's being evaluated,
16 experience of providing that work in the community,
17 who internally will make those decisions or
18 externally as to how the RFP will be drafted, and
19 what will be the components? Because how the RFP is
20 drafted and what the components are asking for is
21 benchmarks of success or a high evaluation determines
22 who wins the RFP in the end.

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We're working very
24 closely with DOE on all those issues. Our
25 expectation is because by the time the new contracts

2 go into effect, they will be at DOE, that the RFP
3 will be issued by them, but we're working closely
4 with them around the design of the program and
5 thinking through all the issues that you're
6 identifying.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I'm going to go back
8 to that point. But what is the status of ACS' lease
9 negotiations on buildings that currently house your
10 childcare and early childhood education programs? So
11 where are we with lease negotiations on buildings
12 that currently house your childcare and early
13 childhood education programs?

14 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Council Member,
15 are you asking overall or in regard to specific
16 facilities or programs?

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Overall because the
18 next question after that is how many EarlyLearn
19 programs are currently in city direct lease
20 buildings?

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I'm going to ask
22 Deputy Commissioner Vargas to speak to this.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: So, the
24 lease negotiations continue for our facilities, and
25 currently we have 74 EarlyLearn programs in city

2 lease facilities, but we continue those negotiations,
3 and again, we're working closely with the Department
4 of Education with the expectation that those
5 properties and leases will also transfer over.

6 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: How many of these
7 direct leases are currently expired and in renewal
8 negotiations?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: So, we have
10 28 in tenant no hold over status, which is the month-
11 to-month. Those are 28 which are expired by have a
12 month-to-month lease in place.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What is the reason
14 for the month-to-month lease in place? Because the
15 month-to-month lease is what's giving many of the
16 provider's high level of anxiety because the month-
17 to-month also precludes them from being able to, as
18 they understand it, respond to the RFP, because the
19 RFP requires, as I understand it, a negotiated lease
20 with the City.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: Yep. So,
22 first of all,--

23 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] And this
24 is a big point of contention.
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: Yes, and my
3 office hears about that very frequently, and we work
4 closely with our providers particularly around the
5 level of anxiety that they feel when they learn that
6 they're in a month-to-month lease status.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And it also impacts
8 other funding opportunities for them well.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: I understand
10 that. The process in the City to renew leases is
11 quite a long process, and so the month-to-month
12 lease, the tenant no holdover status allows us to
13 continue to pay to continue to have the program there
14 and to continue to negotiate to ensure that we get
15 the best possible rate on the lease going forward.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Let me ask you, on
17 average what is the duration of the lease renewals
18 being negotiated? Is it 10, 15 or 20 years?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: Right now
20 they're about 10 years.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Approximately 10
22 years. Because the challenge that our providers are
23 facing right now is the fear that they're in this
24 month-to-month lease program. The RFP is going to
25 come out. They're going to apply. They're not going

2 to qualify, and then another probably larger
3 organization which we've seen comes in, and then they
4 win the RFP, and then they take over. They bring
5 their own people in to provide the services and local
6 people are out of a job. That's the main point of
7 contention that we do not want to see happen moving
8 forward.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: So, of
10 course we understand that concern. One, I want to
11 separate the lease issue, although I understand how
12 they're connected with the procurement issue. As you
13 know, we have to abide by procurement laws in the
14 City, and so we don't know who the winners of the
15 procurement will be. When we have City lease
16 facilities, those facilities are part of the
17 procurement process, and so if we are in the process
18 of a procurement, we will put in the procurement the
19 buildings where the City has interest. Either the
20 City has a direct lease or the City owns the
21 property. So, those become spaces where people can
22 apply for to provide childcare.

23 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What does the City do
24 in a case where the lease is expired? You're just
25 coming out of a 10-year lease, but now the cost that

2 the landlord is asking for is so exorbitant that it's
3 not something that the City feels that it can afford
4 to maintain. How do they then continue to provide
5 services in that particular community servicing that
6 same catchment area and that same group of young
7 people?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: Well, I will
9 say that in the two and a half years that I've been
10 in this position, I don't think there's been a lease.
11 There's been significant negotiation, a lot of
12 negotiation with our landlords, but this
13 Administration has shown a real commitment to
14 ensuring that we preserve childcare spaces in this
15 city.

16 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: How many of these
17 lease renewals have you actually finalized that are
18 in this month-to-month stage?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: I think we
20 might have to get back to you with that specific
21 number.

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Have any direct lease
23 buildings been sold by the landlord in recent years,
24 and has ACS exercised it's right of first refusal to
25 purchase any of these buildings? What is ACS' policy

2 on the City's right of first refusal on the purchase
3 of these buildings?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER VARGAS: That is a
5 question that I'd like to get back to you. There's a
6 lot of detail there and, you know, the process of
7 renegotiating buildings includes not just ACS but
8 also DCAS is involved with us, and so I'd love to get
9 back to you with some answers on that.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I definitely am going
11 to be in touch with you about that, because this is
12 going to impact a large segment of our community and
13 providers that have been doing work for 30, 40, 50
14 years in our community, and the month-to-month lease
15 is what's giving them a high level, a very high level
16 of stress and anxiety about not knowing their future
17 and what this transition is going to mean for them.
18 Just wanted to jump into a few more issues and then
19 turn it over back to my colleagues. Wanted to get
20 into the, as was stated, the attrition rate and
21 caseloads of Child Protective Specialists. IT states
22 the attrition rates and the caseloads of CPS staff
23 continues to be a concern, and no additional
24 resources are reflected in the Agency's budget to
25 address this issue. Can you talk about the fact that

2 that is the reality, but it's also a conversation
3 that we're having here?

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It is-- as I said
5 earlier, it's a great concern for me and for us as
6 well. It is addressed in the budget in that, as I
7 said. We are hiring in advance of attrition, and so
8 the budget does reflect the ability to hire enough
9 staff to complement, but the attrition rate is higher
10 than we want it to be, and there's a lot we need to
11 do to bring the attrition rate down. Some of it--

12 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Are you
13 only hiring to match the attrition rate, or are you
14 hiring on top of that.

15 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We're hiring in
16 advance of attrition. We're not waiting for the
17 attrition to hire. We're hiring--

18 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] But
19 you're not bringing in additional people.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yes, we are.

21 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: How many additional
22 people are you anticipating over the attrition rate?

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, we have
24 hired, as I said, between February of last year and
25 April this year we've hired 700 new CPS workers.

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Heard that.

3 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, that will be
4 enough, we think, to offset the attrition. However--

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] But how
6 many people actually left that you then hired, or how
7 many are you anticipating would leave? So I'm trying
8 to understand is it that we're just replacing staff
9 at this point that's either left or is anticipated to
10 leave, or are we actually bringing in enough staff to
11 address the issue of burn out, of challenges faced
12 with the jobs, overload and casework; are those
13 issues being addressed through this plan?

14 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, those issues
15 need to be addressed through a multifaceted approach.
16 Staffing is a critical part of it, but it's not the
17 only part. We need to look at-- as I said, we need
18 to look at the tools that we're giving the staff. We
19 need to look at the support that they have. We need
20 to look at training. We need to look at, you know,
21 quality of work life for them. There's a whole range
22 of things that bear on the attrition rate and the
23 moral that feeds unnecessarily high attrition. The
24 thing that we're, you know, ultimately focused on is
25 making sure that our CPS case workers have a

2 manageable case load that allows them to do the work
3 they need, the way they need to do it, and right now
4 our average caseload is higher than we would like it
5 to be. We need to get it down to a lower level and
6 we're doing that through a whole range of things,
7 including an addition making sure that we look at the
8 process by which our cases are able to move from our
9 Child Protective area to our Preventive area, because
10 there are a number of cases that once we've completed
11 the investigation, if there isn't a serious imminent
12 risk to the child, we can safely transition them to
13 preventive services if there's an availability of
14 preventive services. So, addressing the capacity and
15 the backlog for preventive services will also relieve
16 the pressure on child protective. So it's a
17 complicated dynamic. There are some things we're
18 currently doing, but as I said in my testimony there
19 are a number of additional things we're working on
20 that I actually hope we'll be in a position to have a
21 dialogue with the Council about before we get to the
22 Adopted Budget because some of them will have
23 resource implications.

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What is your pipeline
25 for hiring? Where are your staff members that you're

2 hiring, where are they coming from? Because if
3 you're hiring so many people, let's say 700 as you
4 just expressed, there has to be a pipeline. Are they
5 coming from our CUNY system? Are they coming from
6 other sources, other agencies? Where are the-- where
7 is the staff coming from?

8 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's a-- we-- it's
9 a civil service position. It's a civil service test
10 position. So we do tests on a regular basis over the
11 course of a year, and then those who score
12 successfully on the test go on a list from which we
13 hire. We haven't had difficulty actually recruiting
14 through that mechanism. That hasn't been a concern.

15 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And where are the
16 majority of the people coming from actually?

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, apparent--

18 UNIDENTIFIED: [off mic] Some are changing
19 careers.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah. All-- I
21 mean, we can probably give you more detail on that.
22 CUNY is a source certainly, people coming out of the
23 CUNY system, people coming from other careers. We
24 can probably give you sort of an overview of the
25

3 different areas from which people come into Child
4 Protective Specialist work.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Just wanted to in
6 closing before turning it over to my colleagues-- so,
7 the funeral services for Zymere Perkins was actually
8 held in my district at the Church of the Open Door.
9 In reading your entire testimony, acknowledging the
10 role that domestic violence plays in so many issues,
11 what has the agency done, given your focus on
12 domestic violence, given the understanding of an
13 overload of caseworkers, given all of these different
14 things and all of the ways that Zymere Perkins as
15 tragically overlooked, how utilizing your testimony
16 and where we're putting resources throughout the
17 City, have we safeguarded that a Zymere Perkins
18 situation does not happen in the City of New York?

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: The Zymere Perkins
20 case was a terrible tragedy, terrible tragedy, and as
21 a result of it, as you know, we received a number of
22 recommendations from outside partners, and we also
23 did quite a bit of internal analysis tool to
24 determine what new protections we needed to put into
25 place. Domestic violence was one of the issues.
There, of course, were other issues there as well--

2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: [interposing] Many.

3 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: that we've
4 addressed including our relationship with Department
5 of Education and number of other things, but with
6 regard to domestic violence, what we have already
7 done is expanded our capacity to ensure that our CPS
8 staff have the professional consultative back-up to
9 identify domestic violence and respond appropriately.
10 So we have ramped up a number of clinical consultants
11 we have in our CPS field offices so that when there
12 is a possibility of a domestic violence, our CPS
13 staff can consult and I will actually tell you that
14 when I shadowed a CPS team in the field last week I
15 observed a consultation between that team and one of
16 the clinical-- domestic violence clinical consultants
17 before we went out into a home where there was a
18 possibility of domestic violence. So, I saw
19 firsthand the impact that had on their ability to
20 address the situation in an appropriate way. We have
21 done that. We are making the additional investment
22 that I referred to in my testimony in making sure
23 that not just our CPS workers, but our preventive
24 staff as well have the ability to consult. And then
25 we have tightened our relationship with the NYPD in a

2 number of ways because as I had said earlier,
3 whenever there is a domestic violence situation where
4 there's imminent risk to a partner, a parent or a
5 child, we will bring NYPD into the situation as
6 quickly as we possibly can, and we have a number of
7 mechanisms through our various interactions with them
8 and our collaborations to make sure that that
9 happens.

10 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Was the NYPD not as
11 prevalent as a solution to dealing with cases
12 previously? What will be that difference in
13 utilizing the NYPD?

14 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We have ramped up
15 our collaboration with the NYPD through our Child
16 Advocacy Centers, our Incident Response Teams-- I
17 referred to this a bit in the testimony-- as well as
18 our on-the-ground relationships with them through
19 Neighborhood Coordination Officers. So there are a
20 number of ways in which we're strengthening those
21 partnerships.

22 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Talk to me in this
23 case about the case monument of cases so that a
24 situation like this does not tragically fall between
25 the cracks. What's been tightened here in terms of

3 supervisors, upper management and a situation like
4 this coming forward?

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, that-- a
6 number of things, and they're a number of things that
7 we still need to do, but for example, one of the
8 things that the coaches that we're placing into the
9 CPS field offices should help us do is to work more
10 closely with the supervisors and managers to make
11 sure that protocols in domestic violence situations
12 or other situations are appropriately followed by the
13 line staff when they're doing home visits and field
14 investigations. So that's one of a number of steps
15 we're taking to make sure that the practice
16 throughout our field offices is as strong and as
17 consistent as it needs to be. Another is the
18 revamping of our ChildStat program. Again, in
19 ChildStat what we do is we look both at aggregate
20 data on the performance of each of our zones across
21 the City and intensive case studies, and often those
22 case studies involve cases in which domestic violence
23 is an issue. And by now, we are returning to the
24 place where we're engaging all of our managers across
25 the City in the ChildStat process. When we do a case
review that involves a domestic violence situation,

2 that information and that practice is now going to
3 disseminate and help in form practice across the
4 City.

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Thank you, and
6 I look forward to continuing to work with you on many
7 of these issues, certainly domestic violence, as I
8 Chair the Women's Issues Committee, and how it
9 impacts families and also impacts the safety of
10 children. Want to continue to follow up with the
11 EarlyLearn transition, the RFP process, being more
12 transparent, and I also share many of the concerns in
13 terms of making sure that babies and families are
14 safe when coming home from the hospital, and I've
15 been doing a lot of research and seeing what they've
16 done in Finland as well, which has one of the lowest
17 death rates amongst babies in the world. And so much
18 of that has to do with families are literally just
19 given a toolkit, if you will, in order to bring their
20 baby home safely, and I think it should be something
21 that we proactively do to pre-empt having to go
22 somewhere, find something, meet up somewhere, or ask
23 for something that you don't know to ask for. I
24 think the hospital and delivery, every family should
25 be given the option to walking home with a kit of

2 materials that would help them and assist them.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
5 you, Chair. Council Member Barron followed by
6 Council Member Mealy.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Madam
8 Chair, and thank you to the Co-Chairs that are here.
9 Thank you to the panel for coming. What is the
10 number of children who are in the system? How many
11 children are we looking at?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Well, there are a
13 few ways to answer that question. The number of
14 children in foster care in New York City is just
15 under 9,000 as of February of this year. So,
16 typically when we talk about the system we're talking
17 about out-of-home care. So that number would be
18 slightly under 9,000. We could also talk about the
19 number of children who are receiving preventive
20 services in facilities. That number is--

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [off mic] About 22,000 at
22 any given time.

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: About 22,000 and
24 actually--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

3 Preventive care.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: In preventive
5 care, and obviously we would much rather have
6 families receiving-- children receiving preventive
7 care and out-of-home care, so we consider that to be
8 a positive dynamic.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what's the
10 ethnic composition of the children who are in
11 preventive care?

12 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I think we'll have
13 to get back to you with that information. We'll get
14 you-- we can get you detail on that to the extent
15 that we have it.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You don't have an
17 idea or an estimate or a guesstimate? You have no
18 idea?

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: I don't have it
20 off hand, but we'll get it to you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's
22 interesting. My colleagues have talked about the fact
23 that local organizations have not been able to get
24 awards of RFPs, and that others who don't look like,
25 don't understand, and don't have experience of the

2 culture of those children in those organizations, in
3 those settings rather, are getting these awards, and
4 then these organizations turn around and hire the
5 local people to come in and do the work because they
6 don't have the experience. They have the ability to
7 hire grant writers and do that. So I'm not at all
8 comforted by the fact that DOE is now going to be
9 partnering and designing these RFPs, because if you
10 look at the Department of Education, there's been I
11 think a 12 percent decrease in the numbers of blacks
12 who are in the Department of Education, and that's
13 significant. So I'm not at all comforted to know
14 that DOE's going to be working. I think that my
15 colleagues have addressed the issue, although they
16 haven't put the context of race in it, but I think
17 it's very important that we look at that issue and
18 that we try to figure out how we're going to make
19 sure that we're not pushing black organizations and
20 black professionals out from having the ability to be
21 involved with the children in these systems, and I
22 really want to know the number of children, because I
23 think if we don't have young children who see people
24 who are providing services who look like them with
25 whom they can relate and identify and be inspired,

2 then you're creating another kind of situation. In
3 terms of Raise the Age, I'm very disappointed that in
4 fact it's not 16, 17 and 18 year olds that are now
5 going to be considered not as adults. They're going
6 to be-- because we know that the research shows that
7 until about the mid-20's the brain has not fully
8 matured. So, there are lots of things that teenagers
9 do that are just a result of their being impulsive
10 and not being able to have the ability to control
11 their emotions. So you talk about the fact that
12 you're now going to have additional facilities that
13 you'll have to operate for children who are going to
14 be in. Do you have any idea of how many facilities
15 you're going to need? Do you have an idea what types
16 of establishments there will be? Who's going to
17 operate them? Who's going to be trained to work with
18 those children? How many more people will you need
19 in those kinds of facilities? Do you have any idea
20 of that?

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We, as I said in
22 my testimony, we are-- we're doing the estimations of
23 that. It's a bit of a complicated process because we
24 have to look at initially the number of 16 and 17
25

2 year olds on Rikers Island who will be moving off
3 Rikers Island at other facilities.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We then have to
6 look at the number of new 16 and 17 year olds we
7 expect to come into the system, and then because the
8 fundamental thing, which I think is going to your
9 point, Council Member, is the whole goal of this is
10 to enable as many 16 and 17 year olds as possible to
11 take advantage of the same reforms, moving them out
12 of detention where possible into community-based
13 services. That's what has been the hallmark of our
14 Close to Home program and the reforms in our juvenile
15 justice program we have undertaken over the last few
16 years. We want to make that available to 16 and 17
17 year olds as well. So, we have to look at where
18 those young people who otherwise would have gone
19 into-- to Rikers or even into Upstate facilities will
20 now have the opportunity to move into other kinds of
21 services.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, certainly
23 that's an improvement to be able to not have children
24 in the criminal justice system, and also as we talk
25 about Raise the Age, people need to know that those

2 records will not be sealed for 10 years. For 10
3 years these same 16 year olds are going to have this
4 on their record, and it's going to impact how they
5 get housing and jobs. For 10 years their records
6 will not be sealed. So people are talking about yes
7 we did Raise the Age. Yes, but we need to look at
8 all the parameters. And finally I just wanted to say
9 that we need to put money at the beginning of the
10 process. So, that's the root cause. Children don't
11 get adequate education. They're put in a pipeline
12 that leads them to prison. They don't have job
13 opportunities. They don't have summer opportunities.
14 They don't have cultural opportunities, and until we
15 put the money at the beginning, we're still going to
16 get children who are in this pipeline and who are in
17 that system that labels them and hinders them and
18 hampers them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. I just
20 have a statement and two questions, and done. I
21 really would like the breakdown of who and where the
22 applicants for these 700 jobs, because a lot of
23 people are coming from out of state, and we really
24 need to know exactly where these 700 jobs like my
25 colleague just asked for. Could you please get that

2 to us? Because that's important. Like Inez just
3 said, if the children-- if you're getting people from
4 out of state, do not know the culture of this
5 community, how well effective are we really helping
6 our children? And I want to talk about-- Inez Barron
7 just asked about where-- what facilities you're going
8 to put these young people in. Didn't you say you're
9 going to do two of them in the beginning? It's going
10 to be Verizon [sic] and Crossroads. The City just
11 gave 170 million dollars for the construction of
12 Verizon and Crossroads.

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: No, we currently
14 have two facilities, Horizon--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing]
16 Right.

17 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: and Crossroads,
18 those are two current facilities. What we're looking
19 at is a range of options that includes those
20 facilities and other potential locations around the
21 City. We haven't--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] So,
23 you don't have no other locations right now?

24 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We haven't made
25 any decisions yet about which facilities are going to

2 be most appropriate for meeting the needs onto the
3 new legislation.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So, now, young
5 people coming from Rikers Island will go straight
6 into Verizon and Crossroads in this special program,
7 specialized structure facility?

8 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Many of them will
9 go into a specialized, secured juvenile detention
10 facility. That's what the law calls it, but we don't
11 know yet really exactly what that is because we don't
12 have the state regulations. That's the problem.
13 However, that doesn't mean that they will be at our
14 current Horizons and Crossroads facilities. They may
15 be elsewhere, and that's the assessment they're going
16 through right now.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's the
18 assessment. Do you know will y'all be changing any
19 of these facilities' age group? Because they say--
20 you going to get from 16 to 21. You will-- you don't
21 think they have any plans on changing it to a higher
22 age group?

23 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Under the current
24 law, we'll be getting the 16 and 17 year olds. Under
25 state law, and this outside of our control, those are

2 the only ones who are moving from the adult system
3 into the juvenile system.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, and they'll
5 be going into those facilities. I just have one more
6 question. If ACS is issuing more Priority Five
7 vouchers, as children who are currently using them
8 age out, how much savings in the agency making off of
9 these vouchers? Like Steve Levin said, that if you
10 don't give out the vouchers, you're not reissuing, so
11 it will be a lower amount. So, how much money has
12 the agency made as of yet? With not--

13 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: [interposing] We're
14 not saving any money. I wish. I wish we had money
15 that we could re-all--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] So,
17 why not just keep-- when someone age out, put the
18 voucher back in, the five voucher back in?

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We do. The problem
20 is that the state has forced us to implement a market
21 rate which is higher per voucher than it used to be.
22 So, when they-- when we transition from one child to
23 another child, often the cost of that care is going
24 up. So we can fund fewer vouchers with the same
25

2 amount of money, but we're not getting any savings.
3 Quite the opposite.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, thank you.
5 Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
7 you, Council Member. I have one follow-up question
8 and the Chair will have some additional questions.
9 We have lots of other questions that we didn't get
10 to, but we're-- that we didn't get to ask you. We're
11 going to follow up with a letter. We just need to
12 get a commitment that you can get this to us as soon
13 as possible, because we need this during the
14 negotiations of our budget.

15 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Absolutely.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: You also
17 kind of alluded to a couple of time that we needed to
18 have conversations on some budget questions. So, I'd
19 like for-- my Finance team will reach out to the
20 appropriate person on your team to schedule this
21 conversation before the adoption of the budget.

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, and we are--
23 in all the areas I mentioned, we're working very
24 closely with OMB and they of course will want to be
25 involved in those conversations as well.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Of
3 course. So, my question is around Trump and his
4 Administration. I say the name, people laugh now. I
5 don't even know what to do with that. Does ACS have
6 a plan for children that may come into your care
7 whose parents have been deported, one, and there's
8 also been testimony that we've heard from our
9 Immigration Committee that individuals are hesitant
10 to undergo the required background checks to have
11 visitation with their children or become kinship
12 guardians. Has your agency been addressing or heard
13 of these fears, or how can we kind of make families
14 feel-- know that they're safe and engaging with your
15 agency before those young people that may really for
16 the first time interface with your agency because
17 their parents are deported? It's okay. I just--
18 they're fine.

19 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: No one's
21 protesting. Not a pro [sic].

22 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We are very
23 concerned about those issues, Chair, and a number of
24 things we're doing. We-- first of all, we're working
25 in partnership with a number of community-based

2 organizations, Children's Defense Fund and others to
3 educate people about the services that are available
4 and to let people know that our services are
5 available regardless of immigration status. So, we
6 want to make sure people understand that and that we,
7 you know,-- the Mayor has made very clear that, you
8 know, how New York is going to deal with these
9 issues, New York City, and we are consistent with
10 those policies. We are certainly prepared and it
11 will be our obligation if parents are deported and
12 children are in need of care. It will be our
13 responsibly to make sure that we are in a position to
14 care for them, and we will take that responsibility
15 very seriously. And the concerns that you mentioned
16 about guardianship are things that we're monitoring
17 closely. We want to make sure that in every area of
18 service people aren't reluctant to seek services that
19 they need because of fears and especially fears that
20 are not warranted. One of the things I actually-- we
21 did over the last week or so was a series of
22 interviews with Univision to communicate to the
23 Hispanic and the Spanish-speaking community about the
24 availability of our services without regard to
25 immigration status and the fact that people can

2 access our services without fear of reporting. So, we
3 will use any channel we can to get that information
4 out and to reassure those communities that are
5 understandably quite fearful given the policies that
6 are coming from the Federal Government.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: I applaud
8 you for engaging with Univision. There's Telemundo,
9 there's-- my district, there's over 130 languages
10 that are spoken. So this is a very diverse city as
11 you know. So the ethnic media has to be a partner
12 with you in every step of the way when it comes to
13 these issues, especially in the very delicate cases
14 where the children of potential de-port-- of those
15 that are deported will be interfacing with your
16 agency, and if you are deported, what are the rights
17 that you have, and what-- you know, all those are
18 conversations and fears that are very relevant, and
19 I've heard from families that, you know, they want to
20 know do I need to leave a plan and say if I'm
21 deported this is where my child needs to go or this
22 is a neighbor or a family member. But you know, I
23 don't think there's an official agency or an official
24 body that's really communicating to families in the

2 event these things happen, this is how you need to
3 prepare.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We are working
5 very-- in fact, I just I met two weeks ago with
6 Commissioner Agarwal of the Mayor's Office of
7 Immigrant Affairs. We are working with them in all
8 of their public outreach to communities across New
9 York City to make sure this message. We, you know,
10 educated them on the access to an availability of our
11 services so that they can incorporate it into their
12 outreach. So, there's a great deal we're doing, but
13 certainly if there are particular communities,
14 organizations or medial that you want to make sure
15 that we connect with, we would be delighted to have
16 that information.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay,
18 thank you, Commissioner. Chair?

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: And I
21 just wanted to highlight that this space is really
22 going to be used in the next 20 minutes. So they
23 need to set up.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think we have World
25 War II veterans who are having ceremony here after

2 this hearing. So, this is my last question. So,
3 this fall there was also the tragedy involving a
4 child Jaden Jordan, and the investigation into what
5 happened in that case found that there was an issue
6 around staffing over the nights and weekends with
7 staff that's able to do the type of background
8 research to find and identify all the pertinent
9 information regarding a family. And so in this case
10 it was over the weekend. ACS went to the wrong house
11 and tragically missed that child, and that child was
12 killed at the hands of his caregiver either over the
13 weekend or on that Monday before ACS had an
14 opportunity to go back to the right address. Is
15 there anything in the Executive Budget now that we'll
16 be addressing, because that seems to me to be a
17 fixable budgetary issue, having staff over the
18 weekends and nights to be able to do the work that is
19 done during regular business hours. Is that
20 something that's addressed in the Executive Budget?

21 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It is a fixable
22 budget issue, and we are fixing it, and I can tell
23 you, and actually Chairwoman I think you know this,
24 that the first shadowing I did was with a team from
25 the Emergency Children's Services that do the night

2 and weekend work because I knew about this and I
3 wanted to see it firsthand, and we are addressing it.
4 The permanent fix is to hire 43 new staff. The issue
5 was we didn't have the same capacity in the Emergency
6 Children's Services Unit to do clearances on
7 identifying addresses, families, collaterals, and
8 that kind of thing that we had in our daytime CTS
9 offices. We are hiring 43 fulltime staff to create a
10 unit to do that. We're in the hiring process now.
11 We expect to have all those staff on we hope by the
12 end of June. In the meantime, because obviously we
13 need to have this capacity in place, we have
14 transferred staff from CPS offices into ECS. We have
15 asked staff to volunteer to transfer into ECS. We
16 have provided our ECS staff with a new online
17 directory so that they can do searches on things like
18 names and addresses that they didn't have the
19 capacity to do before, and we have trained our
20 managers and supervisors on how to do that and how to
21 do searches on collateral. So, we've put in place a
22 number of interim steps while we hire up the staff
23 that ultimately will bring us to the same level of
24 staffing as we have in our daytime offices.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank
3 you, Madam Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. I have a
5 number of providers that are weighing in and asking
6 questions. This one is very specific. If ACS/DOE is
7 planning to issue new contracts to replace the
8 EarlyLearn contracts that ends in September 2018,
9 what is the earliest, what month must an RFP be
10 issued to meet the deadline? If you agree that
11 proposers need at least two months to respond to an
12 EarlyLearn RFP and it takes another three months to
13 score these proposals before awards are issued,
14 wouldn't an RFP have to be issued by September of
15 this year? If ACS/DOE cannot meet this time
16 schedule, wouldn't you have to extend the current
17 contracts?

18 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: So, the point
19 underlying this question is correct, which is the
20 City procurement process takes some time. So
21 absolutely, if you want back up, the RFP would have
22 to be issued a significant amount of time in advance
23 of when the contacts end. There is the option to
24 extend the contracts if necessary if we need to do
25 that if the RFP is an issue with ample time for

2 proposers to respond. So, this is among the issues
3 that we'll be discussing with DOE.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [off mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I just want to
6 finish. So, it sounds to me that an extension is
7 going to have to happen.

8 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: It's certainly a
9 possibility, but we don't know yet and this is an
10 issue we'll be discussing with DOE as we figure out
11 what the process will be for the next iteration of
12 the contracts.

13 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: What does that
14 extension actually look like? What do you think that
15 would be?

16 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: We don't know yet.

17 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. There's a lot
18 of uncertainty going on, and we have to make sure
19 that we give our daycare providers who are managing
20 hundreds of staff to be able to understand what their
21 future is going to be. So, I hope that these
22 questions are given very serious attention in the
23 next week or two, because like we've both said, we've
24 outlined the timeline. If we don't address this
25 issue now, we have to understand what an extension is

2 going to look like and what type of services and what
3 that RFP process is going to look like.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSELL: Yeah, we
5 appreciate the concern. I know DOE does as well, and
6 as soon as we have clarity on those things we'll
7 share them with you and the providers.

8 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
10 you, Chairs. Thank you, Commissioner for your
11 testimony today. That concludes today's hearing.
12 Thank you again to Commissioner Hansell for being
13 with us this afternoon. I also would like to once
14 again thank my Co-Chairs of today's hearing, Chairs
15 Levin, Cumbo and Cabrera, and the members of their
16 committees. Again, a reminder that the public will
17 be invited to testify on Thursday, May 25th, the last
18 day of budget hearings at approximately 1:00 p.m. in
19 this room. For any member of the public who wishes
20 to testify but cannot make it to the hearing, you can
21 submit your testimony to the Finance Division on the
22 Council's website: council.nyc.gov/budget/testimony,
23 and the staff will make it a part of the official
24 record. The Finance Committee will resume budget
25 hearings tomorrow in this room at 10:00 a.m. with the

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3 Committee on Education to hear from the Department of
4 Education and the School Construction Authority.

5 With that, the hearing is now adjourned.

6 [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 20, 2017