



**David A. Hansell, Commissioner**  
**Testimony to the New York City Council**  
**Committees on Finance, General Welfare and Juvenile Justice**  
**May 15, 2018**

***"New York City Council Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget Hearing"***

Good afternoon Chairs Dromm, Levin, and King, and members of the Committees on Finance, General Welfare and Juvenile Justice. I am David Hansell, Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services. With me are Lisa Parrish, Deputy Commissioner of Financial Services, Lorelei Vargas, Deputy Commissioner of Child and Family Well-Being, and Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner of Youth & Family Justice. Thank you for this opportunity to update you on the ACS Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget and on some of the improvements that ACS is making to our systems, for our providers, and most importantly for the children and families that we serve.

When I testified before you in March I talked about the progress we have achieved during my first year at ACS in implementing changes and practice reforms to usher us towards a more efficient and effective system. Today I will discuss the investments that are embodied in the Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 that will support the agency's continued movement forward.

### **State Budget**

First, when I testified in March we discussed the proposed State budget, which would have made the most drastic cuts to child welfare in New York City in decades. I am very pleased to report to you that the final budget did not include a cap on child welfare funding, enabling us to continue the tremendous progress we're making, with stronger protocols for maltreatment investigations, expanded programs to support families, and a record low number of young people in foster care. I want to thank the

City Council for your powerful advocacy on behalf of our City's children and families during the State budget negotiations. I also want to thank the children's advocacy community in New York City who did extraordinary work to make sure that the State Legislature understood the potential impact of these cuts and persuaded legislators to maintain the State's commitment to this work.

The final state budget does, however, include troubling cuts to our successful youth justice work. While the budget reauthorized Close to Home, it provided no funding for the program. We are deeply disappointed that the budget doesn't continue the shared State fiscal responsibility for juvenile justice in New York City, which has always existed previously and which continues in the rest of the state. We're committed to continuing the innovative and successful Close to Home program that has helped hundreds of young people get their lives on track, and we will continue to seek state support for this work. We remain hopeful that the State will do what is right for our youth and restore funding, and we appreciate the Council's support in this ongoing effort.

## **Federal Funding**

I also want to provide some brief context about federal budget developments that affect our work, in two areas: (1) our federal IV-E funding waiver, and (2) the recently-enacted Family First Prevention Services Act.

### IV-E Waiver

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act is the primary source of federal funding for child welfare and only allows states to draw down federal dollars if children are in foster

care. As such, the current federal funding scheme essentially incentivizes states and localities to fund foster care placements over services that are designed to prevent the need for foster care placement. Since 2014, New York City has received a Title IV-E waiver that allows for flexible use of funds to test new approaches and finance structures that allow a broader array of services to improve child welfare outcomes. Through the IV-E waiver, ACS created Strong Families NYC, which invested more than \$200 million over five years to achieve the following:

- Reduce caseloads for foster care agency staff and increase their supervision;
- Roll out and scale up Attachment & Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC), which promotes responsive, nurturing caregiving of young children, and is now available to all children in foster care ages 6 months to four years old while they are in foster care and when they are reunified with their parents;
- Implement Partnering for Success (PfS), which improves children's access to appropriate mental health interventions while better integrating child welfare and mental health services; and
- Ensure comprehensive trauma screening for all children who come into care.

ACS's Title IV-E waiver is set to expire in December of this year, and we intend to request an extension of this waiver through September 2019. However, the request is subject to State and federal approval, and the federal statutory authority for these waivers expires on September 30, 2019 unless Congress chooses to extend it.

## Family First Prevention Services Act

The recent passage of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act introduces new options, but also new risks, to child welfare funding for jurisdictions across the country. The Family First law aims to reduce foster care placements by allowing federal reimbursement for certain preventive services to families and children in their homes and communities. However, the new law contains provisions that could significantly reduce the likelihood of receiving federal Title IV-E funding for many foster children placed in congregate care, and imposes related unfunded practice mandates.

The new law allows states to request a delay in the implementation of these provisions from 2019 to 2021, and to decide whether to exercise the prevention services option at all. The New York State Office of Children and Family Services is currently analyzing the impact of Family First and is working with other states to determine next steps. We look forward to collaborating with OCFS to develop a response that best serves our children and families.

ACS has long been a pioneer in our use of preventive services to reduce foster care placements and in our work to improve outcomes for children in foster care, well before the passage of Family First. It is essential that we are able preserve the investments that we have made to reform New York City's foster care system and improve outcomes for the families we serve.

## **Budget Overview**

The Administration for Children's Services' budget for the 2019 Executive Financial plan provides for operating expenses of \$2.94 billion, of which approximately \$988 million is city tax levy. Last year's ACS adopted budget was \$3.13 billion. The reduction of \$185 million is primarily due to the transfer of EarlyLearn NYC to the Department of Education (DOE) as part of 3K for All, offset by the addition of funds to support Raise the Age implementation, as well as year-to-year increases in child welfare programs.

Like all agencies across the City, ACS has been asked to identify efficiencies in our budget. We are able to do so through a re-estimate of the number of Juvenile Offenders that are placed by the Courts outside of New York City, which will save \$14.8 million a year starting in FY 2019. Additionally, ACS has realized FY19 savings of \$6.4 million in efficiencies in staff vacancies and \$2.2 million per year in overtime savings. I'm pleased to say that these savings will in no way impact services to families.

## **New Needs**

### Raise the Age

As you know, New York City is in the midst of implementing one of the most expansive juvenile justice reforms in recent history. The passage of Raise the Age one year ago means that, as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, newly arrested 16-year-olds will be treated as juveniles and will no longer be prosecuted as adults or held in adult facilities; the same will be true for 17-year-olds starting on October 1, 2019. Unlike any other

jurisdiction in the entire state, New York City has the additional requirement to remove all 16 and 17 year olds from its adult detention facility, Rikers Island, even before many of them transition into juvenile status under Raise the Age. By October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, they must be housed in a non-Rikers facility to be jointly administered by ACS and the Department of Correction (DOC).

Since enactment of this landmark legislation one short year ago, ACS, our sister City agencies, and our State partners have been working actively to prepare to receive new 16- and 17-year-olds and Rikers youth into our juvenile detention facilities and to develop program models and services at these facilities and in the community that meet the developmental needs of older adolescents. I know that this is an area where many of you have questions, and we are committed to being transparent and collaborative with the Council throughout this work. In that spirit, I would like to share with you today some highlights of the progress we are making to implement Raise the Age.

### **1. New Youth Development Specialist Title**

I am excited to announce today that the Administration has just reached an agreement with our labor partners to create a new civil service title to staff our juvenile detention facilities, one that provides more competitive compensation and that better reflects the qualifications that will be needed to support and protect young people in the juvenile system after Raise the Age is implemented. Working with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and through negotiation with SSEU, Local 371 of District Council 37, we have finalized a new civil service title of Youth Development

Specialist (YDS). I would like to personally thank President Anthony Wells, Local 371, and District Council 37 for their partnership in this effort, as well as our partners at the Office of Labor Relations, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, and my executive staff for their tireless work to bring the new title to fruition.

With the establishment of the new Youth Development Specialist title, we can now move forward with our aggressive hiring plan to bring staff on board by October 1, with continued hiring throughout 2019 and 2020 to enable us to fully staff both detention facilities. Our intent is to proceed with hiring and training new staff as expeditiously as possible. Funds in the Executive Budget will provide support for our recruitment campaign to attract qualified individuals who are interested in working directly with youth in Crossroads and Horizon. We have already developed a dynamic recruitment campaign consisting of print, radio, TV, and social media ads that are ready to launch within the next two weeks. We have established partnerships with some of the leading radio stations in the City to help promote this recruitment effort. We are also working with community organizations and leaders to help recruit potential staff from within the communities we serve. The work of our frontline staff is critical for creating positive outcomes in the lives of the young people that pass through our doors. It is not an easy job, but it is an important one and we look forward to the Council's help to identify the professionals needed to carry it out.



## **2. Construction at Detention Centers**

As you know, renovations are well underway at Horizon and Crossroads to ensure that these facilities can meet the demands of a larger population and the unique needs of older youth. The total budget for long-term renovations at both facilities is \$329 million—with an authorized budget of \$110 million—and nearly \$80 million committed in contracts through the Department of Design and Construction. These contracts fund the immediate health and safety renovations, as well as programmatic expansions to meet the needs of a larger population and older youth. Current construction includes renovations of the medical unit and dormitory halls, wall hardening throughout the facilities, upgraded program areas and classroom spaces, new plumbing and HVAC systems, updated staff and transportation areas, and enhanced security. All health and safety renovations are currently on track for completion in late summer.

## **3. Policies, Protocols, and Training**

ACS has worked hard to establish a system of care within our secure juvenile detention system that is both grounded in best practice and designed to promote a safe, secure environment for youth and staff, and we intend to maintain and enhance that system. We continue to work in close collaboration with DOC to develop a youth-centered framework for co-administering the specialized secure detention facility as required by State law, and have developed critical operational policies and created an IT and administrative infrastructure for tracking youth and retaining critical records.

To maintain these high standards, we have shared this best practice information with DOC and have connected them to the developers of our evidence-based models and treatments to discuss how they can support DOC's training efforts. We are also collaborating with DOC around staff training, and we have shared our training schedule and materials with DOC for use in training the staff who will be working in the specialized secure detention facility. Additionally, ACS has invited DOC trainers to participate in two Training of Trainer (TOT) sessions planned for this June.

#### **4. Interagency Service Improvements for Young People**

Last week, we announced that we've entered into a partnership with Health + Hospitals, who will help manage the contracted health care providers currently working at Crossroads and Horizon. This will ensure that young people in detention continue to receive high-quality health care – and it's also a first step toward ensuring continuity of care for young people throughout the juvenile justice system, from detention through placement and aftercare, and continuing as needed after they are released.

In addition to the comprehensive educational services provided through the DOE's District 79 Passages Academy schools across our juvenile justice continuum, we are working with the DOE to establish high school equivalency programs in detention and Close to Home as an alternative for some older youth. We are also exploring the development of new career certificate programs and better access to vocational schools.

We are also working in close collaboration with our partners at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), the Department of Probation (DOP), and the courts to increase the use of Alternative to Detention (ATD) and Alternative to Placement (ATP) programs to keep young people who do not need to be confined safely in the community with necessary services and supports. We also continue our work with DOP and MOCJ to expand the array of ATD and ATP programs available to young people, including programs specifically designed to address the unique needs of older adolescents.

To aid in our efforts to prevent young people from ever entering the justice system in the first place, we are working with the NYPD to increase access to our Family Assessment Program (FAP). FAP is a juvenile justice preventive program which supports parents and guardians through intensive in-home therapeutic services to help improve family functioning when parents/guardians seek to file a Person In Need of Supervision case in Family Court. Our work with the NYPD aims to help connect families to FAP services when a young person comes into contact with law enforcement, but before the need for court intervention arises. To further increase accessibility to FAP services, ACS's Division of Youth and Family Justice is also working to establish a mobile FAP unit to reach youth and their families directly in the community.

Raise the Age is a massive undertaking, yet despite the enormity of this system reform and the aggressive State-mandated timeline for implementation, New York City may effectively be excluded from accessing the funds allocated for Raise the Age implementation in the State's FY 2019 budget, rendering this necessary reform an unfunded mandate for the City. To meet the significant new funding needs created by Raise the Age, the Executive Budget allocates \$51 million to ACS for FY 2019, which grows to a baseline value of \$100 million at full implementation in FY 2021. This funding will support Raise the Age implementation in a number of ways. The Executive Budget provides new funding for additional staff who will work directly with the youth in our secure detention facilities and eventually in the specialized secure detention facilities. The budget also includes funds that will enable us to build on our successful juvenile justice preventive programs, which allow youth who would otherwise be sent to detention or placed in Close to Home to remain safely in the community with supervision, services, and other supports.

Funding in the Executive Budget will also allow ACS to bolster our array of Alternative to Placement (ATP) preventive programs, and will allow us to expand Close to Home and Non-Secure Detention contracts to create additional capacity in our juvenile justice residential continuum to accommodate an increased census under Raise the Age. It will also enable us to strengthen our array of services and programs for young people throughout our juvenile justice continuum.

## Close to Home

Another major investment included in the FY 2019 Executive Budget covers the loss of state funding for the Close to Home Initiative. As I stated, despite the City's advocacy and the overwhelming evidence of the success and effectiveness of Close to Home, New York State chose to eliminate every dollar of funding for Close to Home in the State FY 2019 budget, just as the number of youth in Close to Home is expected to more than double under Raise the Age. While the State chose to walk away from its obligation to support justice involved youth in New York City, Mayor de Blasio has added \$30.5 million to the Executive Budget to replace the state funds that have been stripped from the Close to Home initiative—in addition to the \$38 million in City funding that has supported this initiative over the past several years.

The Close to Home initiative launched only five years ago, but in that time has resulted in a 51% decrease in the number of youth who enter placement and has dramatically changed the way we approach services and programming for justice involved youth. The additional investment of City funds will allow ACS to continue the work that has positioned New York City as a national model for juvenile justice reform.

One of the many lessons we learned through our implementation of Close to Home is that the success of a young person's reintegration into the community after residential placement rests largely on the strength of the aftercare supports they receive. This truth is all the more important as we prepare to receive older youth in Close to Home under Raise the Age. With this in mind, ACS has developed a comprehensive strategic plan to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth and

bolster public safety, funded in the Executive Budget at \$3.6 million in FY 2019 and scaling up to \$7.5 million in FY 2020 and the out years.

The Close to Home Aftercare Strategic Plan will expand our focus in three important areas:

1. Improving System Capacity to Assess and Support Youth:

- Implement a validated risk assessment tool (the Youth Level of Service Instrument) to better identify and respond to needs and risks that influence youth delinquency.
- Partner with DOP to train ACS and Close to Home provider frontline and supervisory staff on best practice community supervision strategies for youth.
- Expand ACS's use of Family Team Conferencing as an evidence-based tool for use with youth who are out of compliance with aftercare requirements or at risk of compromising public safety.

2. Strengthening Youth Monitoring and Accountability and Enhancing Public Safety:

- Pilot an Evening Reporting Center which will invest in a youth-serving neighborhood organization to help prevent further delinquency by providing intensive services and supervision for youth in the community.
- Implement a Graduated Response protocol for youth on aftercare that uses a series of accountability-based incentives and sanctions to encourage better decision-making and compliance with aftercare requirements.

- Ensure that Close to Home residential placement providers continue to work directly with youth as they transition from placement and participate in aftercare services and programming.

### 3. Enhance Interagency Partnerships:

- Conduct joint case reviews with DOP to share information and case planning ideas for youth with both juvenile justice and child welfare involvement.
- Create enhanced training capacity for Close to Home staff and providers and aligning efforts with DOP, DOE, and other city agencies.
- Create an additional team of Investigative Consultants—retired NYPD law enforcement investigators—to work closely with the NYPD Juvenile Crime Squad to locate and return youth to care.

## **Other ACS Initiatives**

### Preventive Services Investments

New York City is at the forefront nationally in providing evidence-based preventive programs to support families. ACS has steadily increased the availability of evidence-based prevention programs that are shown to reduce rates of maltreatment and improve overall child and family wellbeing. Thousands of families are receiving intensive counseling tailored to their needs, and thousands of parents are receiving parenting coaching to help them cope with the pressures they face and raise healthy children. Generous investments in our preventive services by the de Blasio

Administration and by the Council have allowed us to develop a quality model budget to ensure providers can implement the best possible service models to support families and are appropriately compensated for doing so. As I noted during my testimony in March, ACS announced the model budget components in January of this year and by the end of this current fiscal year, we expect to complete the final stages of amending provider contracts to implement the enhancements.

In January 2018, ACS announced a pilot protocol for expanded services to protect families at risk of, or experiencing, domestic violence. Under the new protocol, ACS's Investigative Consultants assist preventive agencies with identifying safety issues for families receiving prevention services when there are domestic violence risk factors and/or criminal history, a new adult has been added to the household or has taken on a caretaker role, and there are children under 7 years of age in the household. This month, ACS will also procure a demonstration project to test new methods for working with families experiencing domestic violence, which will serve 130 families experiencing domestic violence, who are under court-ordered supervision, or are referred to or seek ACS prevention services. The service model will allow families to receive both preventive services and a clinical therapeutic intervention for domestic violence.

This Spring we are also rolling out new preventive services focused on supporting families that have very high service needs, in particular those under Court-Ordered Supervision or at risk of court intervention. ACS recently notified providers of awards for 960 additional slots—including in evidence-based clinical models such as



Functional Family Therapy and Child-Parent Psychotherapy. This service model will be fully implemented in FY2019.

### NYC Interagency Foster Care Task Force

This March, the NYC Interagency Foster Task Force released its first report outlining 16 actionable recommendations to the City to improve outcomes for children and families in the foster system. We thank Chair Levin and Public Advocate James for their roles in shaping the work of the NYC Interagency Foster Care Task Force, and we thank the City Council for its continued commitment to this priority.

Upon release of the Task Force report, ACS immediately launched initiatives to address two of the report's key recommendations – increasing the number of youth in foster care who are placed with relatives or close friends (“kinship care”) from 31% to 46% by the end of 2020, and increasing the number of youth in after-school programs that can help improve academic performance and social skills.

For the kinship care recommendation, ACS has established new dedicated DCP staff resources and is working in partnership with national experts to provide training and technical assistance to our staff in the foster care agencies and our Division of Child Protection (DCP).

ACS is working in partnership with DOE and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to implement these recommendations and to improve educational outcomes for youth in care. ACS and DYCD have executed a Memorandum of Understanding to allow our agencies to share information that will

enable ACS to identify youth in foster care who attend DYCD afterschool enrichment programs and those who do not, so that we can work to increase utilization and better position young people for academic success.

ACS remains committed to doing all that we can to advance all of the recommendations of the Foster Care Task Force, and we look forward to working with the City Council, the Public Advocate, our sister agencies, providers, youth, parents, and advocates on these critical initiatives.

### EarlyLearn NYC

As part of the Mayor's commitment to early education, ACS's EarlyLearn NYC contracts will be transferred and integrated into DOE's Division of Early Childhood Education in 2019. This integration will build on the important work done by EarlyLearn programs today, strengthening birth-to-five care and education in New York City and creating a more seamless experience for children and families into elementary school and beyond. The transfer of EarlyLearn will also support the Mayor's 3K For All initiative, which will ultimately offer free, high-quality early education services to all three-year-olds in NYC. In addition to meeting regularly to ensure a smooth transition, ACS and DOE are working together to continue enrollment in our contracted system; DOE's outreach team is assisting with outreach to families who may be eligible for EarlyLearn and is also hosting trainings for providers on best practices for outreach, and building community partnerships

As EarlyLearn NYC transfers to DOE, ACS will continue to administer the City's child care voucher system, which serves low-income families, families receiving cash assistance, and families involved in the child welfare and homeless systems, among others. We will continue our efforts to bolster the quality of care in this system, which serves 29,000 children under the age of 5. And we are committed to continued efforts to make child care available to some of the most vulnerable families in NYC, including many of whom are involved in our child welfare system.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the ACS Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget with you this afternoon. ACS and our partners across the City have been threatened with some of the steepest funding cuts from the State that we have seen in recent years, but despite these challenges we are continuing to move the agency forward and improve child welfare, juvenile justice, and early education services and programs throughout the City. I want to thank the thousands of ACS and provider staff whose tireless efforts make it all possible. I also want to express my gratitude to the Council for your leadership and for your steadfast support for our efforts, and I look forward to our continued partnership. I am happy to answer your questions.



Human Resources  
Administration  
Department of  
Homeless Services

Department of  
Social Services

**Testimony of Steven Banks, Commissioner  
Department of Social Services**

**Before the New York City Council Finance and General Welfare Committees  
The DSS Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget**

**May 15, 2018**

Good morning. I would like to thank the City Council's Finance and General Welfare Committees as well as Chairs Danny Dromm and Stephen Levin for giving us this opportunity to testify today about the Department of Social Services' Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget and highlight for these Committees the ongoing work across the Department of Social Services to implement comprehensive reforms to better serve low-income New Yorkers.

My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS). In this capacity I oversee the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Joining me today are DSS First Deputy Commissioner Molly Murphy, HRA Administrator Grace Bonilla, DHS Administrator Joslyn Carter, DSS Chief Program Planning and Financial Management Officer Ellen Levine, and DSS Chief of Staff Scott French.

The 2019 Executive Plan is the product of decades of advocacy by many in this room to effectuate reforms to make HRA and DHS programs and services more accessible to and effective for New Yorkers in need.

The FY19 Plan reflects reforms and investments since FY14 that have enhanced our services and assistance, including the following initiatives:

- **Expanding free legal assistance for New Yorkers** in danger of eviction in Housing Court by increasing funding for legal services for tenants to \$93 million in FY19 – a more than fifteen-fold increase from the 2013 level of \$6 million. And over the last four years during this expansion, evictions by city marshals dropped by 27 percent and more than 70,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes;
- **Implementing with the Council's support, over the next five years, universal access to counsel to provide legal services** for all New York City tenants facing eviction in Housing Court, which at full implementation with an annual investment of \$155 million will serve a projected 125,000 cases and benefit 400,000 New Yorkers each year;
- **Providing emergency one-time rent arrears assistance to 217,000 households through FY17**, helping rent-burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes;

- **Creating and implementing rental assistance programs and restoring Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities** which through March 2018 helped 87,300 children and adults move out of, or avert entry into shelter, through this commitment of permanent housing resources;
- **Expanding, with the leadership of now Speaker Johnson, access to housing benefits and support for New Yorkers with HIV through “HASA for All”;**
- **Launching the largest municipal commitment ever to build and expand supportive housing** by committing to develop 15,000 new units in 15 years;
- **Increasing access to public benefits and assistance** by ending a one-size-fits-all approach, implementing technology initiatives to streamline administrative processes, eliminating counter-productive case sanctions, reducing unnecessary fair hearings, ending WEP, and implementing new employment programs that emphasize education and training, including a college option;
- **Adding 239 emergency beds and 54 transitional units to our domestic violence shelter system, with more on the way so that we can increase our capacity to help 13,300 children and adults a year, an approximately 50 percent increase over the prior level of 8,800 individuals served annually – the first increase in domestic violence shelter capacity since 2010;**
- **Increasing baseline funding for legal assistance for immigrants** from \$7 million in FY13 to \$29.7 million in FY18, which enabled immigrant New Yorkers to receive legal aid in approximately 15,000 cases in FY17, as a result of the four-fold increase in the City’s overall commitment to immigration legal assistance programs since FY13; and
- **Implementing and managing the IDNYC program, the largest municipal identification card program in the country, through which more than 1.2 million identification cards have been issued.**

In March, at the Preliminary Budget hearing, I came before the General Welfare Committee to discuss significant reforms implemented over the prior four years in addition to these highlights. The FY19 Executive Budget Plan for the Department of Social Services, including both HRA and DHS, again includes continued investments in social services and homeless services programs that have been missing in the budgets of years past.

At the outset of this Administration, we focused our efforts on implementing major reforms to enable HRA to address poverty and income inequality more effectively than the agency had been doing in the prior two decades. We also made fundamental changes to the ways in which benefits are accessible to clients.

We accepted the premise, and addressed the reality, that New Yorkers who are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table, who are on the brink of homelessness, or who urgently need healthcare and housing benefits should have access to assistance that is not mired in bureaucratic red tape.

## **HRA Investments reflected in the FY19 Plan**

We ended WEP, the unpaid Work Experience Program (WEP), which required clients to work for no compensation in jobs that provided little to no job training or valuable work experience. Instead, today we administer programs with more effective work activity initiatives, including additional Job Training Program (JTP) slots added in the Department of Sanitation and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services as well as enhancing the subsidized employment program, known as SET (Shelter Exit Transition), for homeless clients. We developed a new set of employment contracts that began in April 2017 to better assess and prepare clients for long-term employment opportunities. And we supported a change in the State Social Services Law to permit clients to obtain college degrees that can help them proceed on a career pathway and off the public assistance caseload with greater earning power. The FY19 budget for employment services and related programs is \$269 million, including contracts, subsidized employment, education and training, the Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCare) program, case management, and transportation costs.

We have embraced a harm reduction approach to programs, so that individuals with substance use disorders are supported and connected to services, not subjected to punitive actions for their substance use, which can distance clients even further from the supports and services they need. We also funded the requirements of new Local Laws such as Naloxone training and distribution for staff and residents across both the HRA HASA system and the DHS system.

We successfully advocated for another change in the State Social Services Law so that HRA no longer has to impose employment-related durational public benefits sanctions. In practice this means clients do not lose essential benefits critical to putting food on the table and remaining stably housed. Additionally, clients are not churning on and off the caseload so administrative costs, as well as staff resources, are no longer being diverted to unnecessary State fair hearings – the number of State fair hearings has declined by nearly 40 percent and the City is no longer subject to a potential \$10 million State penalty for unnecessary hearings.

We have continued to build out and improve the ACCESS HRA portal so that our clients are able to have immediate access to their case and benefits payment information, obtain budget letters online, confirm their rent payments to their landlord, and conduct a broad range of transactions with the agency on their smartphone or on a computer without having to come into our offices, and do business with us in a way that is most convenient for clients so that we can work for them.

As of February 2018, there were more than 1 million ACCESS HRA online accounts for SNAP/food stamps households, and more than 2.5 million documents have been submitted online through our ACCESS HRA mobile app. Nearly 80% of SNAP applications are submitted on-line, the majority from outside an HRA location. This means that people no longer have to miss work to come into an office or wait in line to see a worker to get access to these important benefits.

Our system improvements didn't stop there – for SNAP recertification eligibility interviews and for most application interviews you no longer have to sit around waiting for us to call you. Now you can call, at your convenience, our on-demand call center to conduct your eligibility recertification interview. But if

you prefer in-person interactions with our staff, you can choose to come into a center and wait for an in-person interview. The same on-demand system is now being rolled out for applications and will be fully implemented in FY19.

In October 2015, before the implementation of the on-demand call center, only 52 percent of the completed SNAP recertification interviews were conducted via telephone. We now have 76 percent of the interviews held by phone – a 46 percent increase.

The Executive Capital Plan includes funding for further development of the ACCESS HRA portal to optimize mobile responsiveness and to allow clients to make case changes and to request special grants and rent subsidy renewals on-line. This investment will also allow for a centralized work tracking system that will automate workload distribution to improve client services and make our provision of assistance more effective and efficient.

To ensure access to benefits and services for clients with disabilities, we settled a 2005 lawsuit, *Lovely H.*, and are now utilizing new tools to assess whether clients need reasonable accommodations as the result of physical and/or mental health limitations or other impairments. HRA then provides the appropriate accommodations, including referrals to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) program as well as other services designed to assess and meet the needs of clients with disabilities. These services are budgeted at \$97 million annually and are included in the employment related budget that I mentioned earlier.

So far in FY18, as compared to same period of FY17, we've seen increases in key service areas: a three percent increase in federal disability awards for clients and a 21 percent increase in the number of clients with disabilities placed in employment.

Do all of these reforms and changes mean that our clients may not experience problems at our centers? Of course not. Even with these major reforms, we recognize that there is always room for improvement.

We've worked hard to ensure that our staff has the necessary and appropriate tools and training to interact with clients in ways that support the mission of HRA and DHS – for our clients to be supported as they move forward with healthy and safe, independent and fulfilling lives.

#### **DHS Investments reflected in the FY19 Plan**

With respect to DHS, in April 2016 following the 90-day review of homeless services, and in March 2017, following the release of the Mayor's *Turning the Tide* plan, I announced significant managerial and policy changes to reform how the City approaches homelessness. In the FY19 Executive Plan, the addition of \$207 million (\$186 million City) in FY18 and \$256 million (\$159 million City) in FY19 and the outyears in shelter re-estimate funding along with baseline funding added in the Preliminary budget reflects the composition of our caseload and the tenets of *Turning the Tide*, in that it supports getting out of clusters, opening more expensive new high quality shelters, and using hotels as an interim measure.

At the core of these reforms we are maximizing a client-centered and cost-effective prevention-first focus to avert homelessness whenever possible and to transform the City's approach to the provision of shelter and homeless services.

I spent my entire legal career working to ensure that government fulfilled its obligation to low-income New Yorkers. In this testimony and in response to your questions, we will discuss crucial investments and reforms in the FY19 Plan that achieve this objective. Our investments are beginning to take hold and are showing signs of progress – for the first time in a decade, the DHS shelter census has not continued to grow. But we know that the transformation of these programs and services will not occur overnight and that we continue to have much more work to do to address the problems that built up over many years.

What drives our clients to seek our services is their need for support to lead independent lives. We want to provide the helping hand our clients need and we are making the investments necessary to do so effectively. In order to implement these reforms over the past four years, we repurposed approximately 550 central administrative positions to front-line client-facing positions to improve services for our clients. This generated \$13 million in City tax levy savings each year to re-invest in many of the client services reforms that I have described today. Overall, the FY19 Executive Plan reflects cumulative City savings of \$369 million that we have achieved in DSS, HRA, and DHS from FY14 through FY18. And the FY19 Plan incorporates over \$200 million in additional City savings: \$38 million in recurring annual savings are related to the DSS integration, \$45 million are related to the Client Benefits Re-engineering project, \$40 million are due to revenue maximization initiatives and the remainder are the result of programmatic and administrative efficiencies and re-estimates, including insourcing, overtime savings, and Citywide initiatives such as procurement reform.

Our reforms are aimed at addressing head on the stigma our clients face, which is based in the idea that poverty and homelessness are often attributed to individual decision-making and individual circumstances, rather than underlying systemic and structural inequality.

For the three million clients we serve annually, that structural inequality is very real; our clients are living in a city where between 2000 and 2014, the median New York City rent increased by 18.3 percent in real dollars and household income increased by only 4.8 percent in real dollars. And while the most recent Housing and Vacancy Survey showed some sign of change in estimating that household incomes among renters rose by 10.9 percent in real terms while rents increased 6.2 percent in 2017, we continue to combat the long-term trend.

Roughly three out of every ten of New York City's renters are severely rent-burdened, and many of these individuals and families are also those who cycle in and out of poverty. As a result of these structural economic factors, 70 percent of today's DHS shelter census now consists of families. More than a third of the families with children in DHS shelters have a working adult. At the same time, 30 percent of the families with children in the DHS shelter system report having a history of domestic violence.

## **Defending the Safety Net**



Deeply held myths concerning low-income families and individuals have driven detrimental federal policy decisions resulting in attacks on and efforts to dismantle the federal social safety net and critical entitlement programs such as cash assistance, SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), Medicaid and Medicare, and disability and retirement benefits.

This Administration's investments in reforms for our clients are continuing despite uncertainty in Washington, including proposed federal cuts to:

**SNAP (food stamps):** In New York City, approximately 1.64 million individuals receive SNAP benefits, including approximately 568,000 children and 333,000 New Yorkers who are 65 and older; 82.5 percent of the 495,000 SNAP-only (not receiving Cash Assistance or Supplemental Security Income) households have income, 38.2 percent have earned income, and 53.1 percent have unearned income (including disability benefits, social security, and unemployment insurance).

The 2018 House Farm Bill and the Trump budget put forth some of the most radical and damning SNAP proposals in recent memory, including cutting off benefits for as many as 80,000 clients who are unable to find work. Under the proposed elimination of Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) in the Farm Bill, we estimate preliminarily that some 100,000 cases between 130% and 200% of poverty on the non-cash assistance, non-SSI SNAP caseload could lose their SNAP/food stamps benefits. Without BBCE, a family may no longer be eligible for SNAP benefits if they had a small increase in their income or assets.

While striking at the heart of this critical anti-hunger program, the SNAP proposals would also place an enormous administrative burden on our agency. An administrative cap proposal included in the Trump budget puts at risk some portion of the approximately \$150 million of federal administrative reimbursement that the City receives. And at the same time, new administrative burdens imposed by proposals such as the elimination of BBCE will require substantial administrative resources to reevaluate approximately 390,000 SNAP cases.

And every lost dollar of SNAP/food stamps in New York City results in lost economic activity to the city. Prior to any of the proposed federal cuts, New Yorkers spend roughly \$3 billion in SNAP/food stamps each year, which results in \$5.1 billion in economic activity based on the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' (CBPP) evaluation of the impact of SNAP spending on local economies.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** The proposed changes to the TANF block grant include instituting a 10% annual cut (\$240 million for New York State), eliminating the contingency fund, and changing work requirements. This would cause the State to lose funding, which would impact New York City as the largest local social services district in the State.

As of March 2018, 214,000 New York City residents, including children, received federal TANF-related cash assistance.

Nearly 23 percent of TANF and TANF-related parents (those in the "maintenance of effort" program for families who have received five years of assistance) are working but do not earn enough to leave our caseload – that's approximately 19,000 families on our caseload. Further, TANF and TANF-maintenance

of effort funding supports shelter rate payments for approximately 77 percent of families in DHS shelter, and TANF supports part of the NYS child care block grant as well as HRA employment and Domestic Violence programs. The proposed changes to TANF could have significant consequences on the budgets for each of these programs and the New York City residents who rely on them.

**Medicaid:** The proposed elimination or capping of the Affordable Care Act expansion and market place subsidies as well as ending the program as an entitlement and subsequent conversion to a block grant with a per capita cap would negatively impact some 3.5 million New Yorkers in our city.

**Housing Opportunities for people with AIDS (HOPWA):** Federal cuts are also proposed for these grants which fund supportive housing services provided by HRA and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, including over 1,900 HASA supportive scatter site and congregate units and community-based programs in DOHMH.

**The Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP):** This federal block grant for utility bills, heating system repairs, and cooling costs would be eliminated, impacting approximately 700,000 households we currently help each year.

While we will continue to work with our Congressional delegation to oppose these devastating proposals that would harm our clients, this is the federal context in which we are moving forward to provide services to low-income New Yorkers in FY19.

### **Addressing Homelessness**

One year ago, we announced our *Turning the Tide* plan to transform the City's approach to providing shelter during the past four decades. Our plan puts people and communities first and accomplishes this goal by ending decades-old stop-gap measures like the 18-year use of ineffective cluster shelter sites and renting commercial hotel rooms that dates back to the 1960s. Instead, through our plan, we will open a smaller number of new borough-based shelters to help families and individuals stay connected to the anchors of life – such as schools, jobs, health care, families and houses of worship – as they get back on their feet.

With significant investments, over the past year, we have been implementing our transformation plan – while at the same time making sure in the short-term that we provide shelter each night to the families and individuals who turn to us for help as required by the right to shelter guaranteed in New York City.

DHS's transformative plan is built on four core pillars: preventing homelessness in the first place whenever we can; bringing people in from the streets 24/7; rehousing people who become homeless; and transforming the haphazard approach to providing shelter and services that has built up over the past four decades.

As we have testified previously, the average monthly census for DHS shelters increased 115 percent from 1994 into 2014 – rising from 23,868 men, women, and children in January 1994, to 31,009 in January 2002, and 51,470 in January 2014. Without the initiatives that we have been implementing, we projected that the current DHS census would be in excess of 71,000 instead of at the 60,000 level where

it is today. In fact, a recent Furman Center study found that the year-over-year shelter census growth from calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2016 was the lowest increase since 2011, the year the Advantage rental assistance program ended, leading to a 38-percent increase in homelessness.

And the DHS shelter census for 2017 remained roughly flat compared to 2016 – this is the first time in more than a decade that the DHS census has remained level. And during the first four months of Fiscal Year 2018 compared with the same period in the prior year, the number of families with children entering the DHS shelter system declined by 15.1 percent and adult family entrants declined by 10.8 percent.

While our efforts and investments are beginning to work, we know we have more work to do. The FY19 Plan reflects continuing investments in these four key areas.

***Pillar One: Prevention First***

Our first priority is stopping homelessness in the first place – an expanded Homebase network providing neighborhood-based prevention services in all five boroughs aims to achieve this by providing increased access to rent arrears grants to keep people in their homes, and universal access to counsel in Housing Court to prevent evictions.

The Homebase program remains at the core of New York City’s homeless prevention efforts. At Homebase sites, New Yorkers are assessed to determine prevention and diversion tools for which they are eligible, including: onsite processing and triage for public assistance and rental assistance, landlord and family mediation, educational advancement, employment, and financial literacy services. We now operate 23 locations through 16 providers, and we will be expanding to 25 locations by the end of FY18. Since 2014 we have nearly tripled the program’s funding because we recognize it is critical to keep New Yorkers in their homes. In FY18, we increased funding to include community-based aftercare and other services, for a total annual budget of \$59 million.

Between FY16 and FY17, enrollments at Homebase increased by 1.2 percent for Families with Children, 28.7 percent for Adult Families, and 30.4 percent for Single Adults.

We have also provided emergency one-time rent arrears assistance to 217,000 households from FY14 through FY17. The FY17 expenditures for this assistance program were \$210 million.

Working with the Council, we have also exponentially increased access to counsel in Housing Court and these services are leveling the playing field for tenants. We increased funding for legal assistance for tenants facing eviction and harassment from \$6 million in 2013 to over \$77 million in FY18 – a more than twelve-fold increase – and \$93 million has been allocated for FY19 for a more than fifteen-fold increase since 2013. When the universal access to counsel law is implemented fully in five years, the annual funding will be \$155 million to handle a projected 125,000 cases that will benefit 400,000 New Yorkers each year. Since 2014, HRA’s tenant legal services programs have provided more than 180,000 New Yorkers with legal services.

As noted earlier, the results from these investments are promising – residential evictions by marshals declined 27 percent since 2013 and in 2017 alone evictions decreased five percent. Over the last four years, an estimated 70,000 people have remained in their homes as a result of the reduction in these evictions.

***Pillar Two: Addressing Street Homelessness – Bringing People Inside***

**HOME-STAT**

Our investments and program reforms to the City’s comprehensive HOME-STAT (Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams) program to address street homelessness have helped 1,480 people come in from the streets into transitional programs or permanent housing. And today these 1,480 individuals remain off the streets.

HOME-STAT is the nation’s most comprehensive outreach program, which includes 24/7/365 citywide outreach efforts, through which hundreds of highly-trained not-for-profit outreach staff, including licensed social workers, proactively canvass the streets to engage homeless New Yorkers.

Since 2015, through our new investments, we doubled and are now tripling to more than 1,700 the number of low-threshold safe haven beds to better serve our street homeless population. We also more than doubled the number of outreach staff canvassing the streets and working to engage New Yorkers who are experiencing street homelessness to nearly 400 outreach staff today.

Overall we have more than doubled the City’s investment in street homeless programs, increasing by more than \$53 million (119 percent) – from \$44.6 million in FY14 to an investment of \$97.7 million in FY19.

***Pillar Three: Rehousing***

The end of the Advantage rental assistance program in 2011 had devastating results and by 2014 the DHS shelter census increased by 38 percent, or by approximately 14,000 people.

To fill the gap left by the elimination of the City’s rental assistance program and other rehousing programs from 2011 to 2014, beginning in 2014 we created and implemented a variety of rental assistance programs and developed associated incentives for landlords. We also restored Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities that had been eliminated prior to 2014.

As a result of our restoration of rental assistance and rehousing programs, over 87,300 children and adults have moved out of, or averted entry into, shelter through March 2018. In FY18 the budget for rental assistance is \$190.5 million, increasing to \$200.8 million in FY19. This reflects the fact that many of our clients who were moving out with CityFEPS are now eligible for State FHEPS (the Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement), which is part of the public assistance budget.

We also made the single largest municipal commitment to Supportive Housing by announcing the development of 15,000 units over 15 years in NYC 15/15. And from 2014 to date, the Administration has

provided Supportive Housing to over 5,000 New Yorkers from shelter and additional New Yorkers in our street homeless programs through a combination of units that have come available through the prior NY/NY pipeline and other initiatives including the new NYC 15/15 initiative. We continue to ramp up the NYC 15/15 program, which improved prior NY/NY plans through 23 recommendations made in the Supportive Housing Task Force's December 2016 report. Through the 15/15 plan thus far, we have made 1,546 awards to providers, including 625 scattered and 921 congregate units, 460 of which are congregate units that have closed on financing and are included in the 3,059 units in the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) production pipeline. Through HPD's overall supportive housing production pipeline, between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2017, HPD has funded an 2,599 supportive units in addition to the 460 NYC 15/15 units through the preservation of existing supportive projects, remaining NY/NY III commitments, and other federal and state projects.

And in order to try to accelerate move outs to supportive housing which the Speaker and Chair Levin have urged us to do, we have raised the maximum rent level for studios to the Fair Market Rent (FMR) level, thereby bringing the monthly rent payment to \$1,514 for scattered-site Supportive Housing rentals, and we are making the landlord incentives for our rental assistance program available for scattered-site Supportive Housing rentals. While HPD and HRA are on-track with respect to the 15-year Supportive Housing Plan targets, this increase in rents for studios and the related landlord incentives are aimed at enhancing our ability to find scattered-site apartments for clients, as congregate units are built and brought online over time.

#### ***Pillar Four: Transforming the Approach to Providing Shelter and Services***

In the *Turning the Tide* plan announced last February, we committed to get out of 360 cluster sites and commercial hotel locations and to shrink the DHS shelter footprint by 45 percent. To date, DHS has gotten out of 100 locations bringing our shelter footprint from the 647 buildings we reported in the *Turning the Tide* plan a year ago to our current use of 547 buildings – a 16 percent reduction in one year.

In order to shrink the footprint of the DHS shelter system by 45 percent and get out of a total of 360 cluster shelter sites and commercial hotels, we need to site approximately 18 shelters per year so that we can open 90 borough-based shelters instead. The borough-based approach will enable families and individuals to be sheltered as close as possible to the anchors of life – schools, jobs, healthcare, houses of worship, and family. In the first year of the plan, we sited 17 shelters, 11 of which are already up and running.

We are committed to a notification process that provides a minimum notice of 30 days to elected officials and community leaders before opening a new permanent shelter. For the shelters that we have sited and opened so far, we provided an average of 65 days of notice before the shelter opened.

When we announced the plan and during the first year of implementation, we have said in public and private forums, in meetings, in dialogue with communities and elected officials, and in the plan itself that we are committed to ongoing engagement and we invite interested communities to work with us on shelter sitings. Shortly before our preliminary budget hearing we sent a letter to all 59 community boards, as well as to local elected officials, reiterating our request for input in site selection by helping to

identify viable sites that not-for-profit providers can propose to us through our open-ended Request For Proposal procurement process.

During the first year of implementation, there are several excellent examples of community engagement that resulted in important shelter sitings and we expect to build on these community engagements as the plan proceeds.

**Getting Out of Clusters and Commercial Hotels:** As noted at the beginning of this testimony, we have ended operation of more than 1,500 cluster units, which is nearly a 42 percent reduction in the 18-year cluster apartment shelter program that had 3,658 active cluster site units in January 2016 when the closure plan was first announced. When we complete the closure of an additional 171 units across 55 locations this June as well as the transition of another 800 cluster units into permanent affordable housing, we will have reduced citywide use of clusters by 60 percent. As we announced when we released the plan last year, we have prioritized ending the cluster program, and we are on pace to end this Giuliani Administration program by our 2021 deadline.

We are also committed to the goal of eliminating the use of commercial hotel rooms that dates back to the 1960s. However, the hard truth is that the transformation of the shelter system will take time. We have been transparent in saying that it will take five to seven years for our plan to be fully implemented, as the new borough-based shelters are developed and opened and the use of clusters and commercial hotels is fully phased out.

Until those borough-based shelters come online we will need to continue the use of commercial hotel locations to meet *immediate* nightly capacity needs.

During the commercial hotel phase-out period, we are improving that experience for homeless New Yorkers and getting a better deal for taxpayers when we have to rely on commercial hotels to address emergency capacity shortfalls. Actual spending will be based on the fluctuating emergency needs of the families and individuals who turn to us for help, including weather conditions, the different demographics of households, level of services and security required, and types of shelter settings available, among others. However, under our contracts, the average nightly rate for a hotel room has been \$174, and no room costs more than \$250 on any given night. But even under contract, rates may sometimes exceed what you and I might pay to rent a hotel room for a night or two—and that's due to our provision of accommodations for caseworkers, microwaves, refrigerators, bedding, and 24/7 security. We also require that our providers have on-site social services.

Transforming the decades-old approach to shelter and implementing our plan is better for homeless New Yorkers and it's better for taxpayers: and it could save the City a total of \$100 million per year when we are able to utilize only shelters and end the practice of using both clusters and commercial hotels.

**Addressing Underinvestment in Maintenance, Security, and Services:** We continue to make progress in addressing the cumulative impact of years of underinvestment in shelter maintenance, security, and client services.

As we have reported previously, the Mayor's Interagency Shelter Repair Squad Task Force conducted more than 34,000 shelter inspections in 2016 and 2017, reducing violations that went unaddressed for many years by 84 percent. And today many of the remaining repairs involve capital projects, which we are funding.

The NYPD now oversees and manages shelter security and this has been a game changer. We implemented 200 hours of enhanced training developed by the NYPD for all new and in-service DHS Peace Officers, and created a new DHS Peace Officers tactical training facility at the Bedford Atlantic Men's Assessment Shelter. We doubled previous investments in DHS shelter security, with a total annual security budget of \$240 million. We have enhanced access control procedures to keep contraband like weapons and drugs out of shelter – and we recently announced that in addition to DHS Critical incident reporting, which is social service reporting, we will provide verified NYPD arrest data as a supplement to that reporting.

Finally, we dedicated an unprecedented amount of funding to reform the rates not-for-profit social service providers receive to ensure our not-for-profit partners are appropriately funded to deliver the services our homeless clients rely on as they get back on their feet; to deploy social workers in family shelters as part of the First Lady's NYC Thrive initiative; and to increase funding for providers for shelter maintenance and repairs. This \$236 million investment in our not-for-profit sector will result in better facilities and services for our clients, and is in addition to the \$163 million we spend annually for health and mental health services.

#### **DHS FY19 Executive Plan Funding**

The FY19 Executive Plan adds \$207 million (\$186 million City) in FY18 and \$256 million (\$159 million City) in FY19 and the outyears in shelter re-estimate funding.

As the Mayor and the Office of Management and Budget Director Melanie Hartzog have stated, we expect this to be the last significant adjustment to the shelter budget this year as the *Turning the Tide* plan continues to take effect. This additional cost is related to two primary factors: more single adults relative to families with children in the DHS census, the use of commercial hotels to shelter them, and the new borough-based shelters. As part of the *Turning the Tide* plan, we announced that we would be closing low-quality cluster units and opening 90 new high-quality, borough-based shelters. Because they provide necessary services, maintenance, and security, the new borough-based shelters are more expensive to operate than the Giuliani Administration's cluster program – although the new shelters are more cost-effective than commercial hotels. As described earlier, we have made significant progress on the plan, and we have reduced the number of cluster units by almost half and announced the first 17 borough-based shelters. In FY19, we will continue to eliminate clusters, bring on new shelters as part of *Turning the Tide*, and begin to mitigate hotel usage, leading to the lower out-year cost that is reflected in the re-estimate.

Other new needs include \$25 million in FY18 for one-time DHS IT systems funding for continued work on vital projects to enhance services and operations. There is also an addition of \$17 million in total and City funds in FY18 for street solutions to fund additional drop-in centers and safe haven beds for street

homeless individuals. Street solutions will be part of the re-estimate in FY19 and the out-years as we continue to evaluate our needs with the implementation of *Turning the Tide*.

The last few slides in our PowerPoint present a number of additional reforms we implemented over the last year, some of which we have discussed at prior hearings. We have accomplished a great deal over the past year, and we will continue with our reform initiatives during the coming year because we know that much more needs to be done.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I welcome your questions.



# Department of Social Services Executive Budget Testimony

**Steven Banks, Commissioner**

May 15, 2018

**NYC**  
Department of  
Social Services

Human Resources  
Administration  
Department of  
Homeless Services

# The Executive 2019 Plan

Is the product of decades of advocacy by many in this room to effectuate reforms to make HRA and DHS programs and services more accessible to and effective for New Yorkers in need.

# The Executive 2019 Plan

The FY19 Plan reflects reforms and investments since FY14 that have enhanced our services and assistance, including the following initiatives:

- **Expanding free legal assistance for New Yorkers** in danger of eviction in Housing Court by increasing funding for legal services for tenants to \$93 million by FY19. And over the last four years during this expansion, evictions by city marshals dropped by 27 percent and more than 70,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes;
- **Implementing with the Council's support, over the next five years, universal access to counsel in Housing Court to provide legal services** which at full implementation with an annual investment of \$155 million will serve a projected 125,000 cases and benefit 400,000 New Yorkers each year;
- **Providing emergency one-time rent arrears assistance to 217,000 households through FY17**, helping rent-burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction stay in their homes;

# The Executive 2019 Plan

- **Creating and implementing rental assistance programs and restoring Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities** which through March 2018 helped 87,300 children and adults move out of, or avert entry into shelter;
- **Expanding, with the leadership of now Speaker Johnson, access to housing benefits and support for New Yorkers with HIV through “HASA for All”;**
- **Launching the largest municipal commitment ever to build and expand supportive housing** by committing to develop 15,000 units over 15 years;
- **Increasing access to public benefits and assistance** by ending a one-size-fits-all approach;

# The Executive 2019 Plan

- Adding 239 emergency beds and 54 transitional units to our domestic violence shelter system, with more to come for an approximately 50 percent increase over the prior level of 8,800 individuals served annually – **the first increase in domestic violence shelter capacity since 2010;**
- **Increasing baseline funding for legal assistance for immigrants** to \$29.7 million in FY18, which enabled immigrant New Yorkers to receive legal aid in approximately 15,000 cases in FY17 ; and
- **Implementing and managing the IDNYC program, the largest municipal identification card program in the country, through which more than 1.2 million identification cards have been issued.**

# REFORMS

ADDRESS  
POVERTY

REDUCE  
INCOME  
INEQUALITY

PROVIDE MORE  
EFFECTIVE  
SERVICES

INCREASE  
ACCESS TO  
BENEFITS

# The Executive 2019 Plan

New Yorkers who are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table, who are on the brink of homelessness, or who urgently need healthcare and housing benefits should have access to assistance that is not mired in bureaucratic red tape.

# We ended the unpaid Work Experience Program (WEP)

- WEP required clients to work for no compensation in jobs that provided little to no job training or valuable work experience.
- Today we administer programs including additional Job Training Program (JTP) opportunities as well as an enhanced subsidized employment program, known as SET, for homeless clients.
- We developed a new set of employment contracts that began in April 2017 to better assess and prepare clients for long-term employment opportunities.
- We supported a change in the State Social Services Law to permit clients to obtain college degrees.

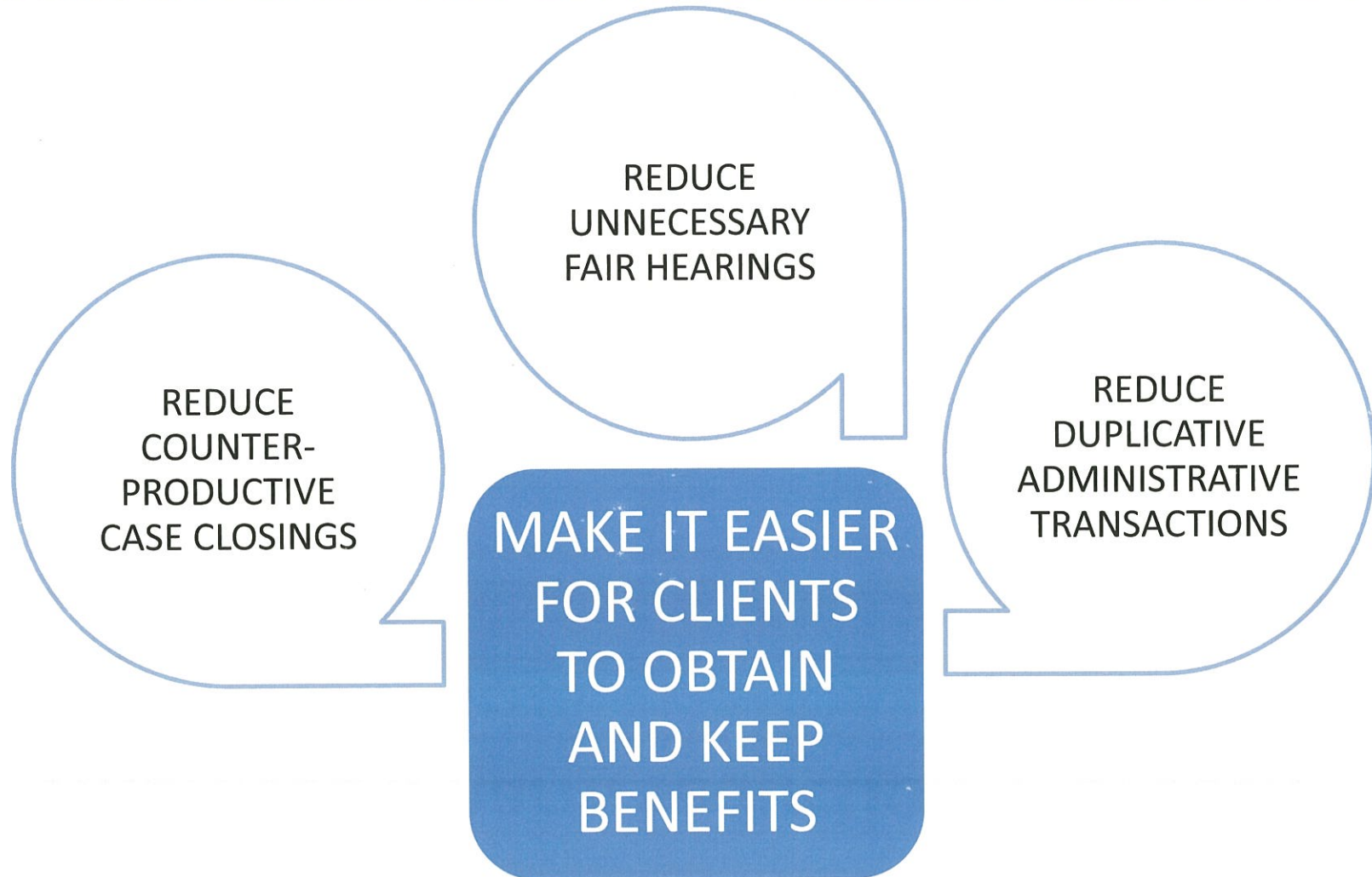
The FY19 budget for employment services and related programs is \$269 million, including contracts, subsidized employment, education and training, the Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCare) program, case management, and transportation costs.



# Embraced a harm reduction approach

So that individuals with substance use disorders are supported and connected to services, not subjected to punitive actions for their substance use, which can distance clients even further from the supports and services they need. We also funded the requirements of new Local Laws such as Naloxone training and distribution for staff and residents across both the HRA HASA system and the DHS system.

# OBTAINED A STATE LAW CHANGE SO THAT HRA NO LONGER HAS TO IMPOSE DURATIONAL PUBLIC BENEFITS EMPLOYMENT SANCTIONS



# ACCESS HRA

Clients have immediate access to their case and benefits payment information, and can obtain budget letters online, confirm their rent payments to their landlord, and conduct a broad range of transactions with the agency on their smartphone or on a computer.

- As of February 2018 there were more than 1 million ACCESS HRA online accounts for SNAP/food stamps households.
- More than 2.5 million documents have been submitted online through our ACCESS HRA mobile app.

The screenshot displays the ACCESS HRA website interface. At the top, there is a black header bar. Below it is a yellow navigation bar with language options: English, Español, العربية, 中文, Kreyòl Ayisyen, 한국어, and русский. Below the language bar are three main navigation buttons: a green button labeled 'Apply Now' with a document icon and the text 'Start New Application / Recertification', and two blue buttons labeled 'Log In' and 'Create Account', each with a user icon. To the right of these buttons is the ACCESS HRA logo, which features a stylized orange and blue circle containing a silhouette of the Statue of Liberty and a city skyline. Below the logo is the text 'ACCESS HRA YOUR WAY'. Underneath the logo and text is a welcome message: 'Welcome to HRA's new online portal. Just one of the ways HRA is changing for you!' followed by 'Apply online for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Cash Assistance, Medicaid renewal.' At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a small box containing the text '[No Title] Image your benefits online. Read agency notices.'

# ACCESS HRA- Home Screen

**“My Cases”** provides the client with case details alleviating the need for a center visit or phone call.

**“My Documents”** allows the user to view documents the agency has received and electronically filed to their case.

NYC

Welcome, Bianca36

English Español العربية 中文 Kreyòl Ayisyen 한국어 русский

ACCESS HRA - My Home

Log Out

**Apply Now**  
Start New Application / Recertification

**View My Cases**  
Track Benefits

**My Documents**  
Track Documents and Notices

**My Activity**

**Draft Applications** 0  
You have no in-progress applications.

**Submitted Applications** 1  
✓ SUBMITTED  
SNAP (Food Stamps): You submitted a SNAP application on 3/27/20  
**View Applications**

**What's New**  
IDNYC is the new, free identification card for all New York City residents, which will give all of us the opportunity to show who we are—New Yorkers To learn apply go here

**Draft Applications**  
AHRA will display any recent draft applications not yet submitted.

The due date provided alerts the user to submit prior to expiration of the application draft.

**Submitted Applications**  
To prevent duplicate application submissions AHRA displays any applications submitted by that user to date.

# Benefits Reengineering

- Nearly 80% of SNAP applications are submitted on-line, the majority from outside an HRA location. This means that people no longer have to miss work to come into an office or wait in line to see a worker to get access to these important benefits.
- For SNAP recertification eligibility interviews and for most application interviews you no longer have to sit around waiting for us to call you.
- Now you can call, at your convenience, our on-demand call center to conduct your eligibility recertification interview.
- The same on-demand system is now being rolled out for applications and will be fully implemented in FY19.
- In October 2015, before the implementation of the on-demand call center, only 52 percent of the completed SNAP recertification interviews were conducted via telephone. We now have 76 percent of the interviews held by phone – a 46 percent increase.

# Benefits Reengineering

The Executive Capital Plan includes funding for further development of the ACCESS HRA portal to optimize mobile responsiveness and to allow clients to make case changes and to request special grants and rent subsidy renewals on-line. This investment will also allow for a centralized work tracking system that will automate workload distribution to improve client services and make our provision of assistance more effective and efficient.

# Reasonable Accommodations for Clients with Disabilities

- HRA settled the 2005 *Lovely H.* class action lawsuit.
- HRA now utilizes new tools to assess whether clients need reasonable accommodations as a result of physical and/or mental health limitations or other impairments.
- HRA then provides the appropriate accommodations, including referrals to HRA's Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) program or other services designed to assess and meet the needs of clients with disabilities.
- So far in FY18, as compared to same period of FY17, we've seen increases in key service areas: a 3 percent increase in federal disability awards for clients and a 21 percent increase in the number of clients with disabilities placed in employment.

## *Turning the Tide*

For decades DHS operated and managed New York City's emergency shelter system to meet the provisions of multiple court orders as a result of the legal right to shelter, without an underlying vision or organizing principle.

The agency's budget was historically developed in such a way that over the course of the year budget modifications were necessary to address significant under-budgeting – and then at the beginning of each new fiscal year rather than fully baselining those added dollars the cycle would begin again by adding significant funding through budget modifications.

This long-standing process has now changed in the FY19 Executive Plan, which will address cash flow problems providers have experienced in the past pending the modification process and enhance strategic planning for the year ahead to meet need and reduce homelessness in the long-term.



# Investments for Change

At the core of these reforms we are maximizing a **client-centered and cost-effective prevention-first focus** to avert homelessness whenever possible and to transform the City's approach to the provision of shelter and homeless services.

**Our investments are beginning to take hold and are showing signs of progress** – but we know that the transformation of these programs and services will not occur overnight and that we continue to have much more work to do to address the problems that built up over many years.

What drives our clients to seek our services is their need for support from us and assistance to help them lead independent lives.

# Investments for Change

We want to provide the helping hand our clients need and we are making the investments necessary to do so.

In order to implement these reforms over the past four years, we repurposed approximately 550 central administrative positions to front-line client-facing positions to improve services for our clients.

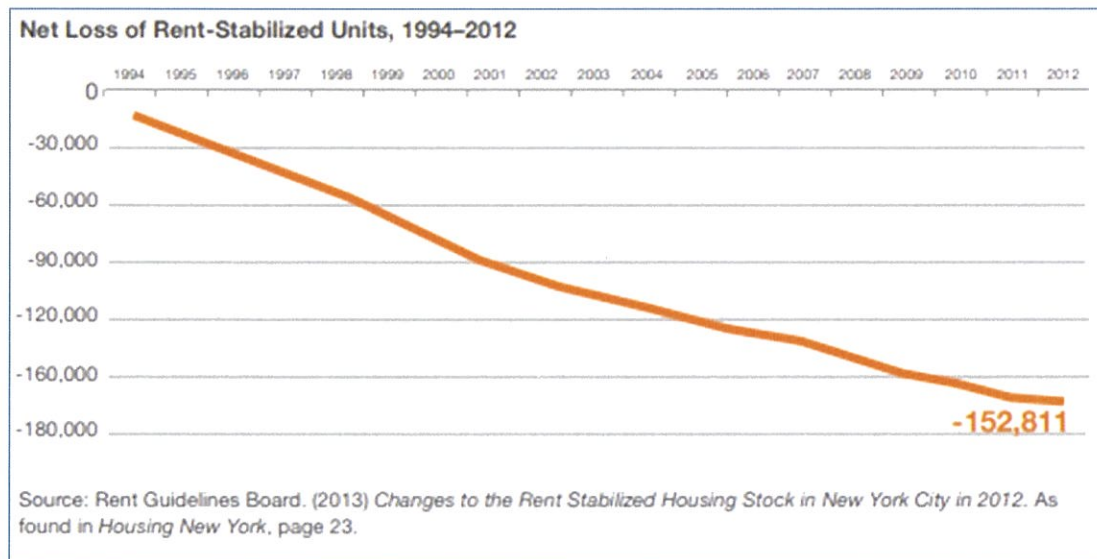
This generated \$13 million in City tax levy savings each year to re-invest in many of the client services reforms that I have described today.

Overall, the FY19 Executive Plan reflects cumulative savings of \$369 million that we have achieved in DSS, HRA and DHS from FY14 through FY18 – and the FY19 Plan incorporates over \$200 million in additional City savings.

- \$38 million in recurring annual savings are related to the DSS integration,
- \$45 million are related to the Client Benefits Re-engineering project,
- \$40 million are due to revenue maximization initiatives and the remainder are the result of programmatic and administrative efficiencies and re-estimates, including insourcing, overtime savings and Citywide initiatives such as procurement reform.

# The Rise of Homelessness

- Between 2000 and 2014, the median New York City rent increased by 18.3 percent in real dollars and household income increased by 4.8 percent in real dollars.
- In 2015 the city had only half the housing it needed for about three million low-income New Yorkers.
- Renters who are only able to afford an apartment costing \$800 or less must search in a market with a vacancy rate of a mere 1.15 percent in 2017, down from 1.8 percent in 2014.



# Defending the Safety Net: SNAP

Approximately 1.64 million individuals receive SNAP benefits, including approximately 568,000 children and 333,000 New Yorkers who are 65 and older; 82.5 percent of the 495,000 SNAP-only (not receiving Cash Assistance and SSI) households have income, 38.2 percent have earned income and 53.1 percent have unearned income (including disability benefits, social security and unemployment insurance).

# Defending the Safety Net: SNAP

- The 2018 House Farm Bill and the Trump budget:
  - cutting off benefits for as many as 80,000 clients who are unable to find work.
  - proposed elimination of Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE), some 100,000 cases between 130% and 200% of poverty on the non-cash assistance, non-SSI SNAP caseload could lose their SNAP/food stamps benefits.
  - a family may no longer be eligible for SNAP benefits if they had a small increase in their income or assets.
  - proposals would also place an enormous administrative burden on our agency; puts at risk some portion of the approximately \$150 million of federal administrative reimbursement that the City receives plus adds new administrative burdens.
- EVERY lost dollar of SNAP/food stamps in New York City results in lost economic activity to the City.

# Defending the Safety Net: TANF

## Temporary Aid For Needy Families

- The proposed changes to the TANF block grant include instituting a 10% annual cut (\$240 million for New York State), eliminating the contingency fund and changing work requirements would cause the State to lose funding, which would impact New York City as the largest local social services district in the State.
- As of March 2018, 214,000 New York City residents received federal TANF-related cash assistance, including children.
- Approximately 23 percent of TANF and TANF-related parents (those in the “maintenance of effort” program for families who have received five years of assistance) are working but do not earn enough to leave our caseload. Further, TANF and TANF-maintenance of effort funding supports shelter rate payments for approximately 77 percent of families in DHS shelter, and TANF supports part of the NYS child care block grant as well as HRA employment and Domestic Violence programs. The proposed changes to TANF could have significant consequences on the budgets for each of these programs and the New York City residents who rely on them.

# Defending the Safety Net

- **Medicaid:** The proposed elimination or capping of the Affordable Care Act expansion and market place subsidies as well as ending the program as an entitlement and subsequent conversion to a block grant with a per capita cap would negatively impact some 3.5 million New Yorkers in our city.
- **Housing Opportunities for people with AIDS (HOPWA):** Federal cuts are also proposed for these grants which fund supportive housing services provided by HRA and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, including over 1,900 HASA supportive units and community-based programs in DOHMH.
- **The Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP):** This federal block grant for utility bills, heating system repairs and cooling costs would be eliminated, impacting approximately 700,000 households we currently help each year.

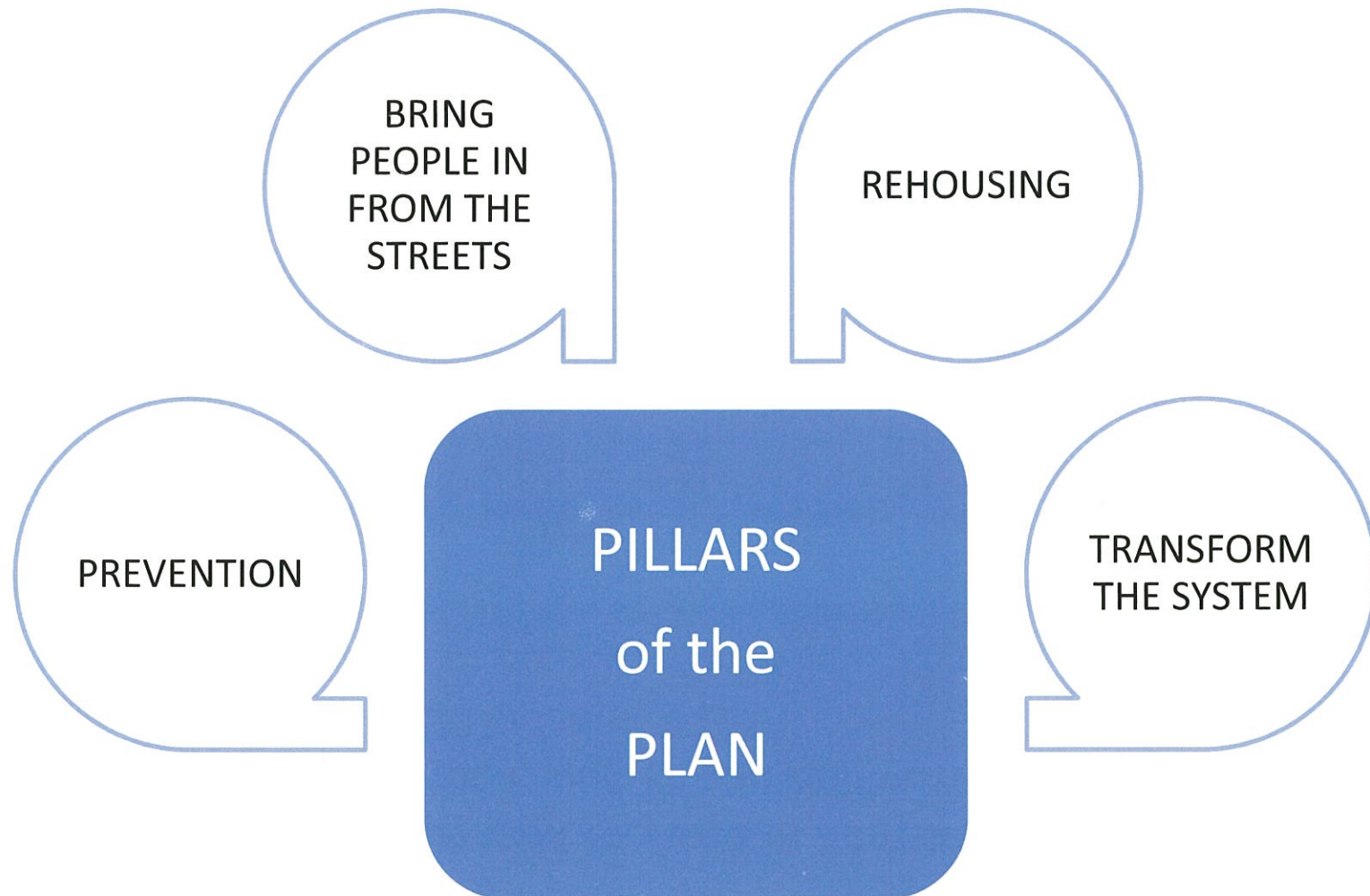
While we will continue to work with our Senators and our Congressional delegation to oppose these devastating proposals that would harm our clients, this is the federal context in which we are moving forward to provide services to low-income New Yorkers in FY19.

# Addressing Homelessness

- One year ago, we announced our *Turning the Tide* plan to transform the City's approach to providing shelter.
- Our plan puts people and communities first and accomplishes this goal by ending decades-old stop-gap measures like the 18-year use of ineffective cluster shelter sites and renting rooms in commercial hotel rooms that dates back to the 1960s.
- We will open a smaller number of new borough-based shelters to help families and individuals stay connected to the anchors of life—such as schools, jobs, health care, families and houses of worship—as they get back on their feet.
- With significant investments, over the past year, we have been implementing our transformation plan – while at the same time making sure in the short-term that we provide shelter each night to the families and individuals who turn to us for help as required by the right to shelter court orders.

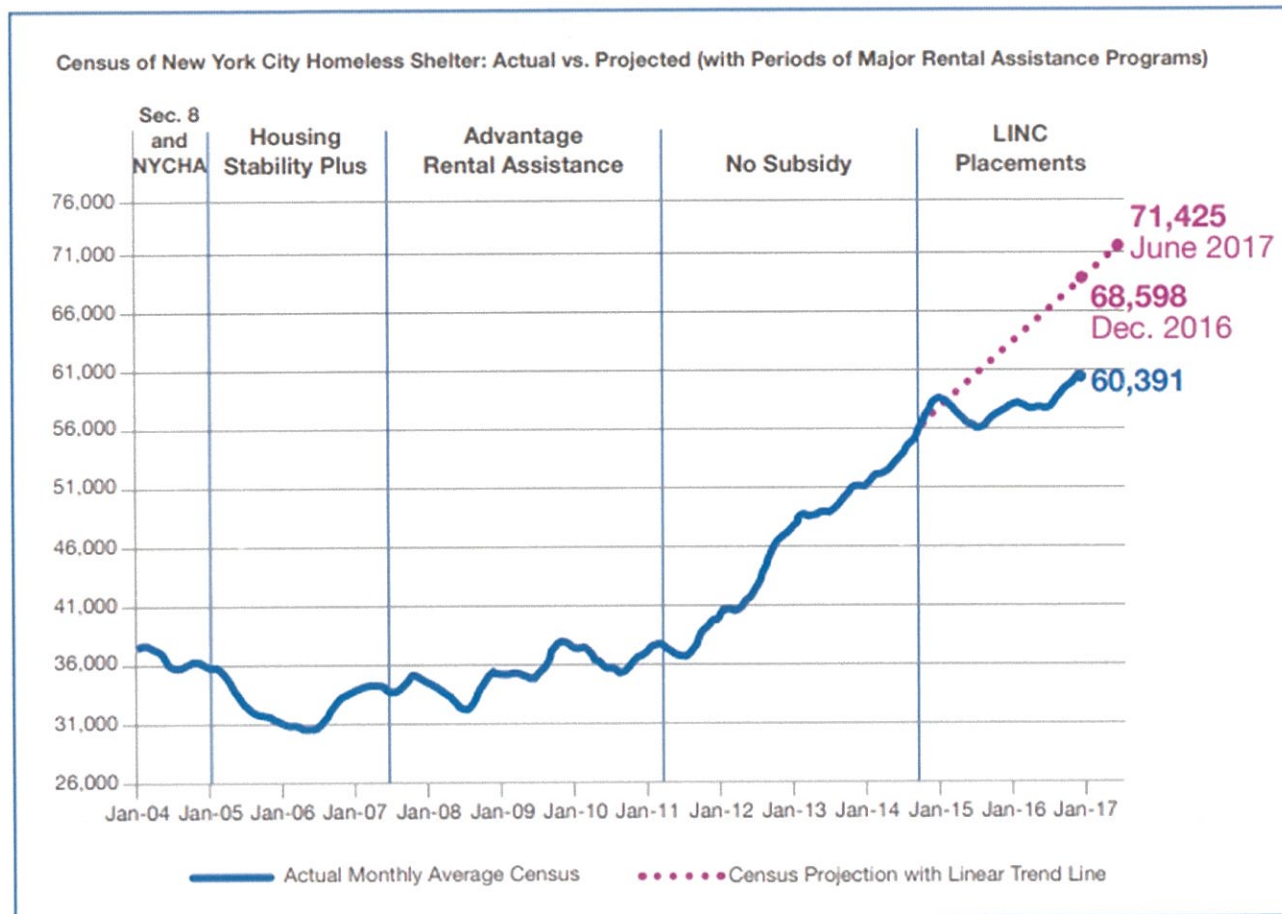


# Addressing Homelessness



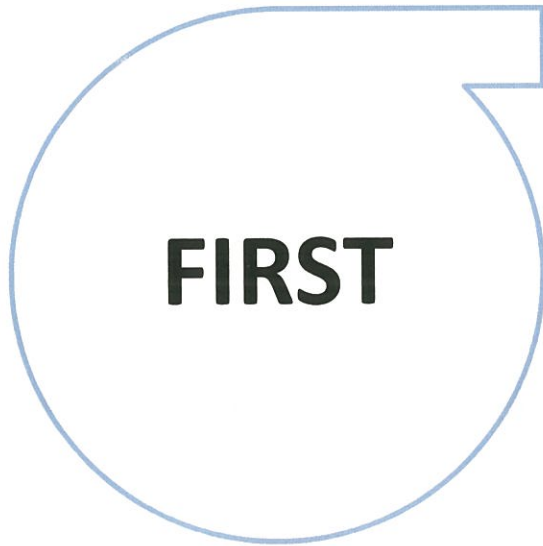
# The Rise of Homelessness

- There has been a 115 percent increase in homelessness over the past two decades – from 23,868 men, women and children in January 1994 to 31,009 in January 2002 to 51,470 in January 2014.



# Addressing Homelessness

- Without the initiatives that we have been implementing, the current DHS census would be in excess of 71,000.
- A recent Furman Center study found that the year-over-year shelter census growth from calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2016 was the lowest increase since 2011, the year the Advantage rental assistance program ended, leading to a 38-percent increase in homelessness.
- **The shelter census for 2017 remained roughly flat year over year for the first time in more than a decade.**



## PREVENTION

Doing more to keep people in their homes by stopping evictions, helping families and individuals remain with family members in the community, and making housing more affordable.

# Homebase

Our first priority is stopping homelessness in the first place – an expanded Homebase network providing neighborhood-based prevention services in all five boroughs aims to achieve this by providing increased access to rent arrears grants to keep people in their homes, and universal access to counsel in Housing Court to prevent evictions.

- At Homebase New Yorkers are assessed to determine prevention and diversion tools for which they are eligible, including: onsite processing and triage for public assistance and rental assistance, landlord and family mediation, educational advancement, employment, and financial literacy services.

# Homebase

- We now operate 23 locations through 16 providers. We will be expanding to 25 locations by the end of FY18. In FY18, we increased funding to include community-based Aftercare and other services, for a total annual budget of \$59 million – nearly tripling the program’s funding since FY14.
- From FY16 to FY17, enrollments at Homebase increased by 1.2 percent for Families with Children, 28.7 percent for Adult Families, and 30.4 percent for Single Adults.
- We have also provided emergency one-time rent arrears assistance to 217,000 households from FY14 through FY17. The FY17 expenditures for this assistance program were \$210 million.

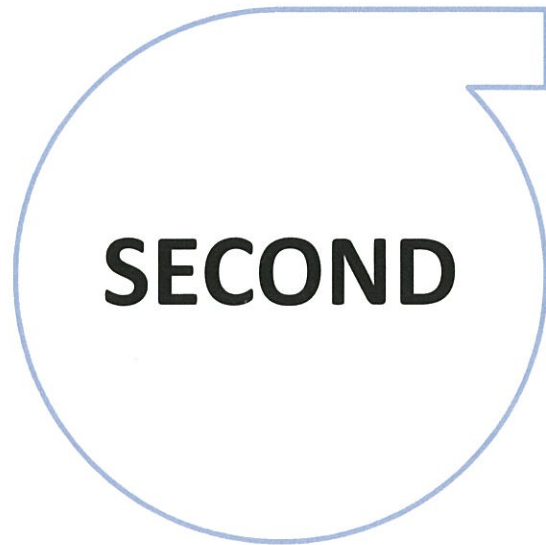
# Legal Services

- We also exponentially increased access to counsel in Housing Court and these services are leveling the playing field for tenants.
- We increased funding for legal assistance for tenants facing eviction and harassment from \$6 million in 2013 to over \$77 million in FY18 – a more than twelve-fold increase – and \$93 million has been allocated for FY19 for a more than fifteen-fold increase since 2013.

# Legal Services

- When the universal access to counsel law is implemented fully in five years, the annual funding will be \$155 million to handle a projected 125,000 cases that will benefit 400,000 New Yorkers each year. Since 2014, HRA's tenant legal services programs have provided more than 180,000 New Yorkers with legal services.
- As noted earlier, the results from these investments are promising – **residential evictions by marshals declined 27 percent since 2013** and in 2017 alone evictions decreased 5 percent. Over the last four years, an estimated 70,000 people have remained in their homes.





## Bringing People Inside

Continuing to enhance our HOME-STAT program to bring people in from the streets.

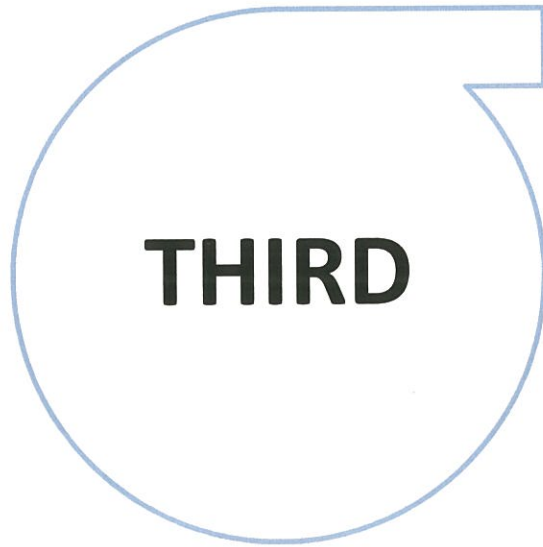
33

# HOME-STAT

- Our investments and program reforms to the City's comprehensive HOME-STAT (Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams) program to address street homelessness have helped 1,480 people come in from the streets into transitional programs or permanent housing. **And today those 1,480 individuals remain off the streets.**
- HOME-STAT is the nation's most comprehensive outreach program, which includes 24/7/365 citywide outreach efforts, through which hundreds of highly-trained not-for-profit outreach staff, including licensed social workers, proactively canvass the streets to engage homeless New Yorkers.

# HOME-STAT

- Since 2015, through our new investments, we doubled and are now tripling to more than 1,700 the number of low-threshold safe haven beds to better serve our street homeless population. We also more than doubled the number of outreach staff canvassing the streets and working to engage New Yorkers who are experiencing street homelessness to nearly 400 outreach staff today.
- Overall we have more than doubled the City's investment in street homeless programs, increasing by more than \$53 million (119 percent) from \$44.6 million in FY14 to \$97.7 million in FY19.



## Rehousing

We created and implemented a variety of rental assistance programs and restored Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities.

# Rehousing

- The end of the Advantage rental assistance program in 2011 had devastating results and by 2014 the DHS shelter census increased by 38 percent, or by approximately 14,000 people.
- To fill the gap left by the elimination of the City's rental assistance program and other rehousing programs from 2011 to 2014, beginning in 2014 we created and implemented a variety of rental assistance programs and developed associated incentives for landlords. We also restored Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities that had been eliminated prior to 2014.
- As a result of our restoration of rental assistance and rehousing programs, funded in large part through city tax levy, over 87,300 children and adults have moved out of, or averted entry into, shelter through March 2018. In FY18 the budget for rental assistance is \$190.5 million, increasing to \$200.8 million in FY19.

# Rehousing: Move-Outs and Community Prevention

FY15, FY16, FY17 & FY18 (thr. March)		
DHS LINC 1	1,909	6,512
DHS LINC 2	798	2,744
DHS LINC 3	628	2,181
DHS LINC 4	3,311	3,703
DHS LINC 5	1,679	1,851
DHS LINC 6	111	350
HRA LINC 3	609	2,098
CFEPS	6,793	22,850
NYCHA	7,137	24,092
SECTION 8	2,306	7,388
SEPS	4,184	4,724
HOME TBRA	470	1,452
421a	345	870
NYCHA -HRA	664	2,245
SOTA	1,217	3,773
FHEPS A (DHS Shelter)	81	251
FHEPS B (Shelter and Community)	78	242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,320</b>	<b>87,324</b>

# Supportive Housing

- We made the single largest municipal commitment to Supportive Housing by announcing the development of 15,000 units over 15 years in NYC 15/15.
- From 2014 to date, the Administration has provided Supportive Housing to over 5,000 New Yorkers in shelter and additional New Yorkers in our street homeless programs through a combination of units that have come available through the prior NY/NY pipeline and other initiatives including the new NYC 15/15 initiative.
- Through the 15/15 plan thus far, we have made 1,546 awards to providers, including 625 scattered and 921 congregate units, 460 of which are congregate units that have closed on financing and are included in the 3,059 units in the HPD production pipeline.
- Through HPD's overall supportive housing production pipeline, between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2017, HPD has funded 2,599 supportive units in addition to the 460 NYC 15/15 units through the preservation of existing supportive projects, remaining NY/NY III commitments, and other federal and state projects.
- We raised the maximum rent level for studios to the Fair Market Rent (FMR) level, thereby bringing the monthly rent payment to \$1,514 for scattered-site Supportive Housing rentals, and we are making the landlord incentives for our rental assistance program available for scattered-site Supportive Housing rentals.



## Transforming the Approach to Providing Shelter and Services

Our new approach will give homeless New Yorkers, who come from every community across the five boroughs, the opportunity to be sheltered in their home boroughs, as close as possible to their support networks and anchors of life, including schools, jobs, health care, families, houses of worship, and the communities they called home, in order to stabilize their lives and return to living in the community as quickly as possible.

40



# Transforming the Approach to Providing Shelter and Services

- We have committed to getting out of 360 cluster shelter and commercial hotel sites in order to reduce our overall DHS shelter system footprint by 45 percent across the city, and open 90 new borough-based shelters across all five boroughs instead.
- To date, we've already gotten out of 100 locations bringing our shelter footprint from the 647 buildings we reported in the *Turning the Tide* plan a year ago to our current use of 547 buildings – a 16 percent reduction in one year.
- In the first year of the plan, we sited 17 shelters, 11 of which are already up and running.
- We've committed to a notification process that provides a minimum of 30-days' notice to elected officials and community leaders before opening a new permanent shelter. To date, with the shelters we've notified on since the announcement of our plan just over a year ago, we've averaged 65 days' notice to communities.

# Transforming the Approach to Providing Shelter and Services

When we announced the plan and during the first year of implementation, we have said in public and private forums, in meetings, in dialogue with communities and elected officials, and in the plan itself that we are committed to ongoing engagement and we invite interested communities to work with us on shelter sitings.

Shortly before our preliminary budget hearing we sent a letter to all 59 community boards as well as local elected officials reiterating our request for input in site selection by helping to identify viable sites that not-for-profit providers can propose to us through our open-ended Request For Proposal procurement process.

## Getting Out of Clusters

- Since January 2016, when we were using a high point of 3,600 cluster units citywide, we have closed more than 1,500 cluster units, representing a more-than 42 percent reduction citywide in this 18-year cluster shelter program.
- We recently announced our plans to transition another 800 cluster units into permanent affordable housing using eminent domain if necessary, which covers more than a third of the remaining cluster units.
- As we announced when we released the plan last year, we have prioritized ending the 18-year cluster program, and we are on pace to end the use of cluster units as shelter by our 2021 deadline.

## Getting Out of Commercial Hotels

- Until borough-based shelters come online we will need to continue the use of commercial hotel locations to meet *immediate* nightly capacity needs.
- Actual spending will be based on the fluctuating emergency needs of the families and individuals who turn to us for help, including weather conditions, the different demographics of households, level of services and security required, and types of shelter settings available, among others.
- Under our contracts, the average nightly rate for a hotel room has been \$174, and no room costs more than \$250 on any given night. We provide caseworkers, microwaves, refrigerators, bedding, and 24/7 security and we also require that our providers have on-site social services.
- Transforming the decades-old approach to shelter and implementing our plan is better for homeless New Yorkers and it's better for taxpayers: and it could save the City a total of \$100 million per year when we are able to utilize only shelters and end the practice of using both clusters and commercial hotels.

## Invest in Maintenance, Security, and Services

- As we have reported previously, the Mayor's Interagency Shelter Repair Squad Task Force conducted more than 34,000 shelter inspections in 2016 and 2017, reducing violations that went unaddressed for many years by 84 percent.
- NYPD now oversees and manages shelter security.
- We implemented 200 hours of enhanced training developed by the NYPD for all new and in-service DHS Peace Officers, and created a new DHS Peace Officers tactical training facility at the Bedford Atlantic Men's Assessment Shelter.
- We doubled previous investments in DHS shelter security, with a total annual security budget of \$240 million.

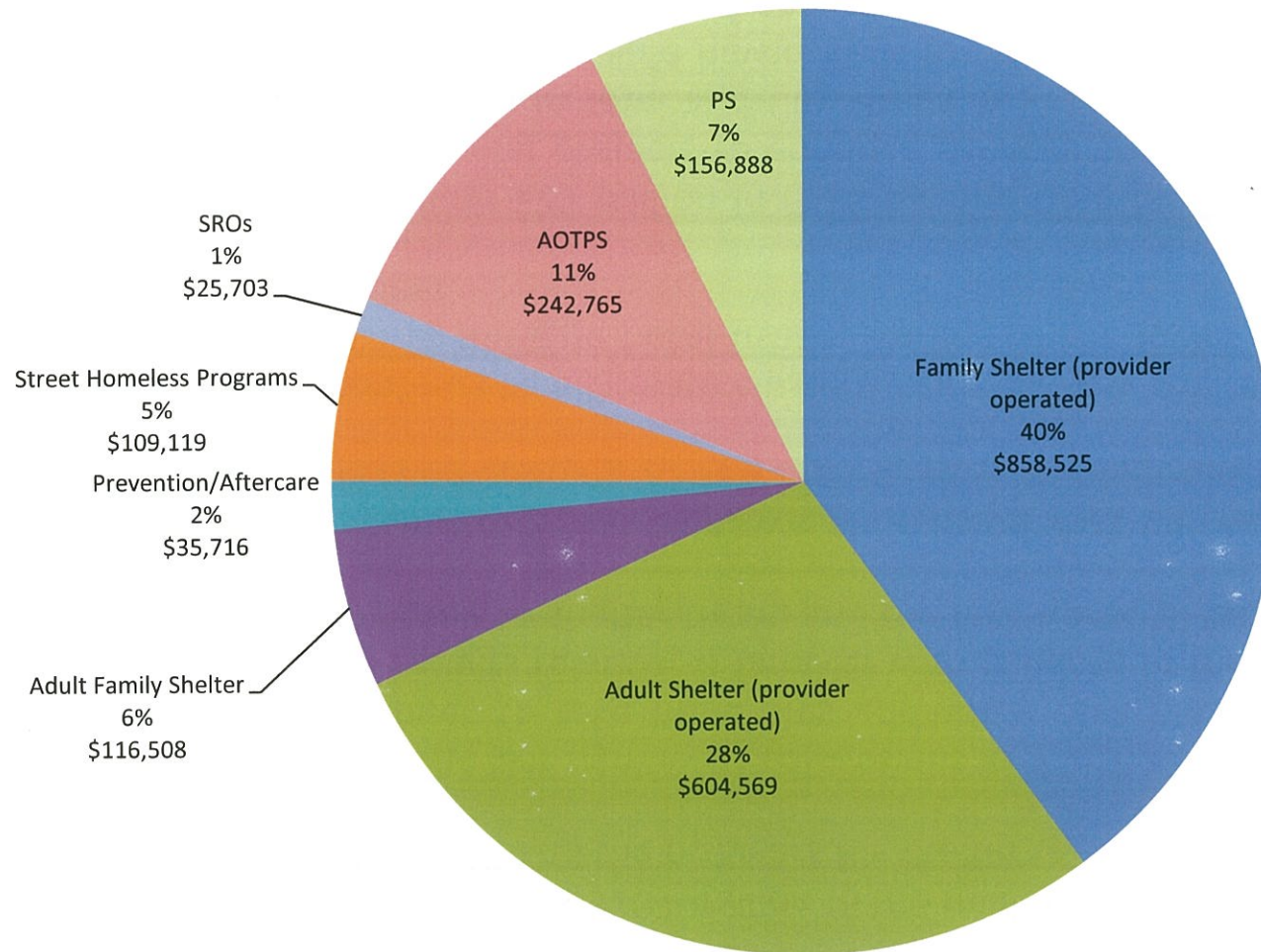
## Invest in Maintenance, Security, and Services

- We have enhanced access control procedures to keep contraband like weapons and drugs out of the shelter – and we recently announced that in addition to DHS Critical incident reporting, which is social service reporting, we will provide verified NYPD arrest data as a supplement to that reporting.
- We dedicated an unprecedented amount of funding to reform the rates not-for-profit social service providers receive to ensure our not-for-profit partners are appropriately funded to deliver the services our homeless clients rely on as they get back on their feet.
- This \$236 million dollar investment in our not-for-profit sector will result in better facilities and services for our clients and is in addition to the \$163 million we spend annually for health and mental health services.

## DHS FY19 Executive Plan Funding

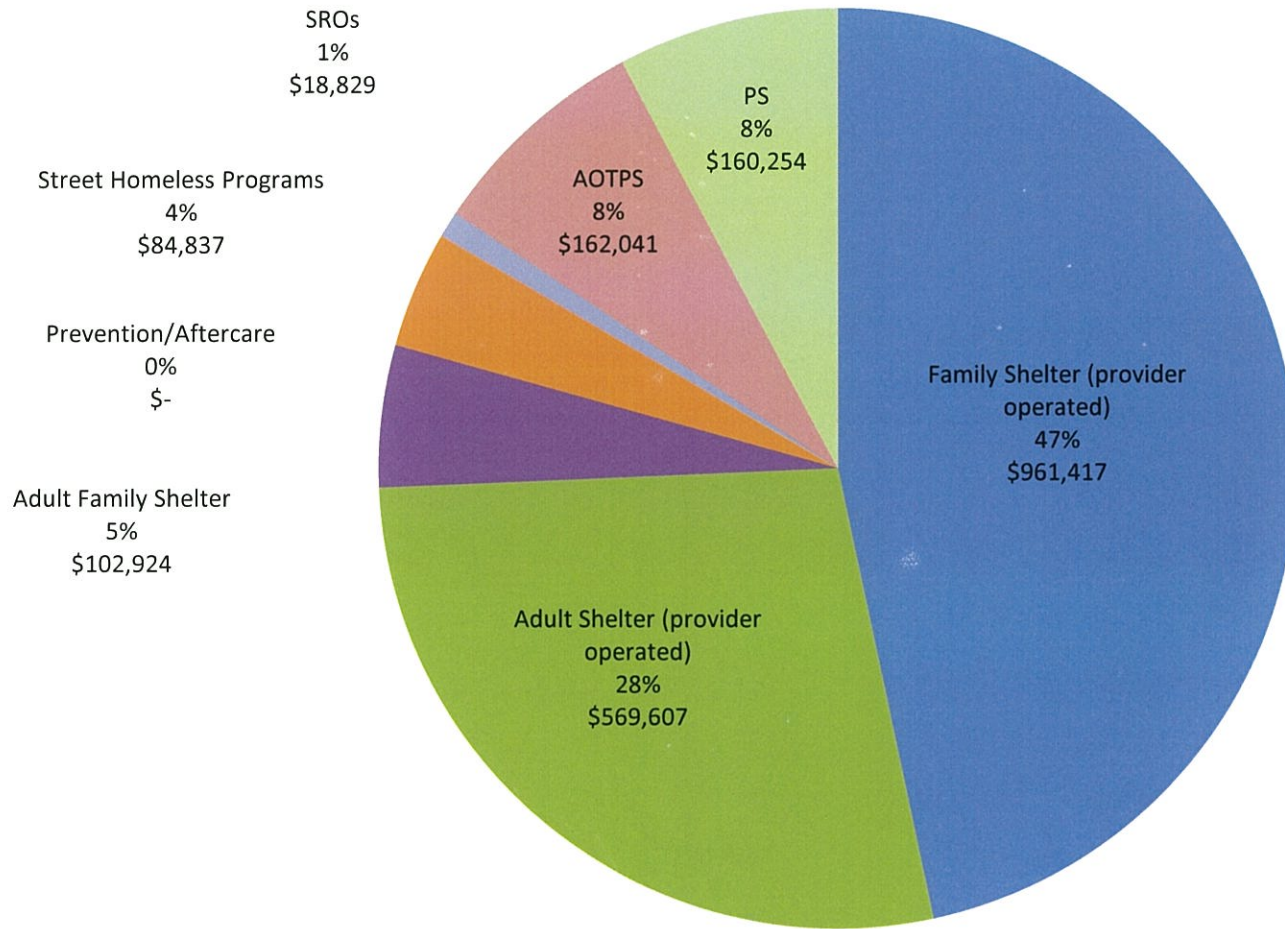
- The FY19 Executive Plan adds \$207 million (\$186 million City) in FY18 and \$256 million (\$159 million City) in FY19 and the outyears for shelter re-estimate costs.
- We expect this to be the last significant adjustment to the shelter budget as the *Turning the Tide* plan continues to take hold. This additional cost is related to two primary factors: more single adults relative to families with children in the DHS census and the use of commercial hotels to shelter them, and the new borough-based shelters.
- As part of the *Turning the Tide* plan, we announced that we would be closing low-quality cluster units and opening 90 new high-quality, borough-based shelters.
- In FY19, we will continue to eliminate clusters, bring on new shelters as part of *Turning the Tide*, and begin to mitigate hotel usage, leading to the lower out-year cost that is reflected in the budget.
- Other new needs include \$25 million in FY18 for one-time for DHS IT systems funding for continued work on vital projects to enhance services and operations. There is also an addition of \$17 million in total and City funds in FY18 for street solutions to fund additional drop-in centers and safe haven beds for street homeless individuals. Street solutions will continue to be part of the re-estimate in FY19 and out-years as we continue to evaluate our needs with the implementation of *Turning the Tide*.

## FY 2018 DHS Budget

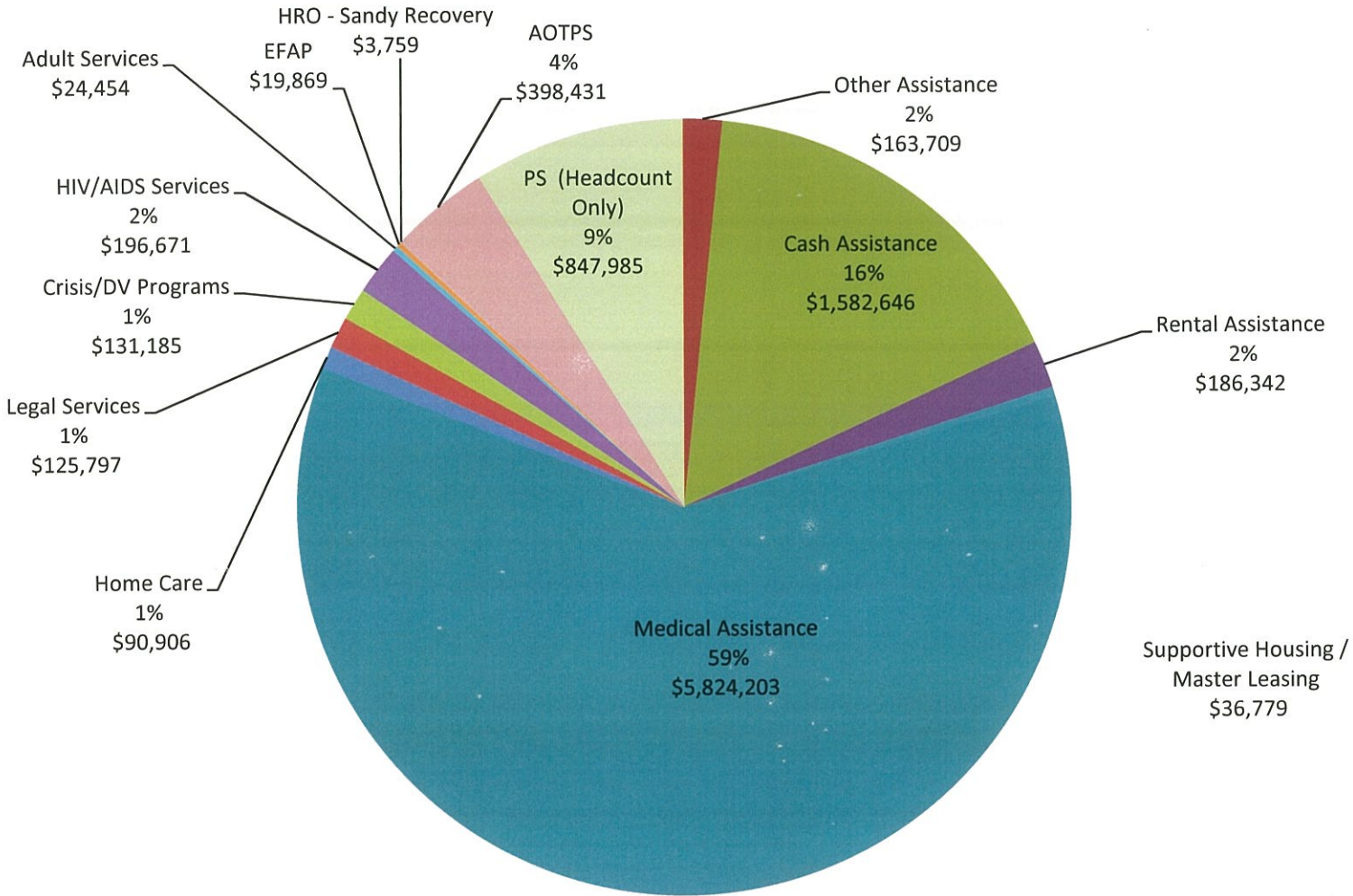




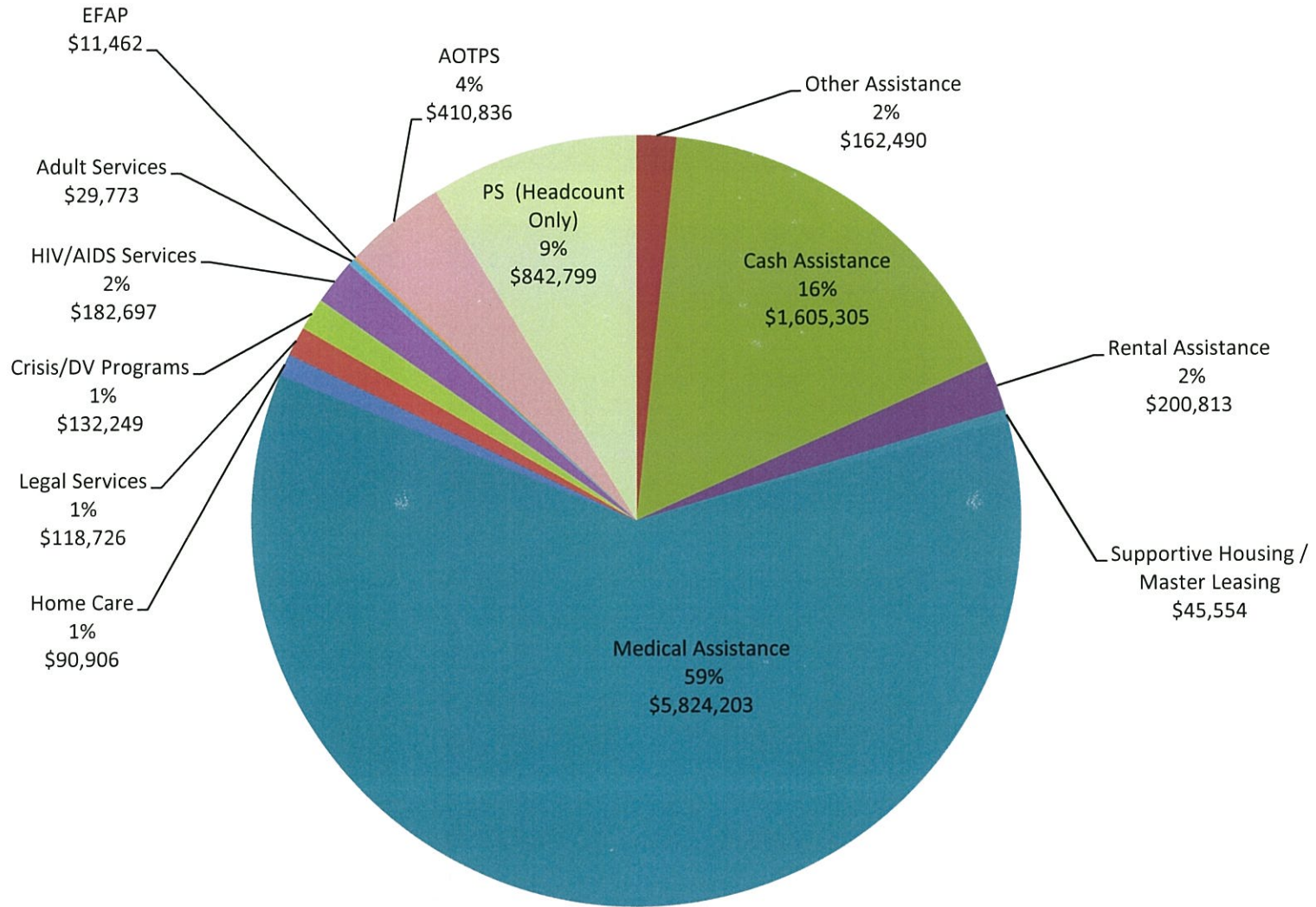
# FY 2019 DHS Budget



# FY 2018 HRA Budget



## FY 2019 HRA Budget



# Recent HRA Reforms

Opioid Overdose Prevention Training has begun for the staff and residents at all HASA Emergency Housing Facilities.

Implemented the Pay It Off Program during the month of August 2017, which provided a match to noncustodial parents (NCP) who paid a minimum amount toward debt owed to HRA. NCPs also received an additional reduction in debt owed to HRA if they enrolled in the Arrears Credit Program

Partnered with CUNY Hunter College's Silberman School of Social Work to develop and implement a curriculum emphasizing the important role that fathers play in a child's life and the value of the child support program in reducing child poverty

On Demand application rollout in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Staten Island which allows SNAP clients to submit their applications online and then call an "On Demand" service agent for an interview

Implemented a process to minimize the need for engagement appointments for Cash Assistance (CA) clients who are unengaged due to the expiration of an exempt status

Released the second annual Office of Civil Justice report including a five year plan which outlines the next five years of legal services delivery in the city

Created a newly developed centralized unit to receive applications, review cases, and make eligibility determination for all FHEPS applications

Developed and launched the first unified city-sponsored supportive housing webpage

Replaced VendorStat with CareerStat to focus more on program performance and service delivery

# Recent HRA Reforms

Enhancements to ACCESS HRA functionality including: SNAP Periodic Report in ACCESS HRA, eNotices, My Cases, and My Documents (added to ACCESS HRA to assist SNAP clients in accessing HRA services through a mobile application)

Increased DV residential service system capacity

Trained and initiated the use of the Interview for Decisional Abilities (IDA) by APS social workers and nurses

Developed new training curriculums for APS vendors and community Guardian vendors

Successfully decentralized Shelter and Senior cases – clients transferred to centers in the communities where they reside

Trained all HASA eligibility staff to review non-citizen applications for public benefits

Expanded existing employment and educational opportunities for HASA clients by implementing a contract to assist in obtaining employment

Expanded the Office of Child Support Services Problem Solving Court Model to the Bronx

Launched a homelessness prevention initiative with the Administration for Children's Services

# Recent DHS Reforms

Targeted outreach to doubled-up families with school-aged children

Fully launched HOME-STAT to address street homelessness, helping nearly 1,500 homeless New Yorkers off the streets who've remained off the streets and subways since its launch, while moving to triple the number of beds dedicated to supporting these individuals

In 2017 alone, the City opened and added 315 beds across 8 locations dedicated to supporting New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness comprised of 265 beds across 5 Safe Haven sites as well as 3 stabilization locations, bringing our current operating total to 1283, more than double what we had at the start of the Administration

Promoted career pathways for shelter residents - Implemented Literacy & GED classes in-shelter

Expanded Shelter Repair Squad 2.0 Operations

Increased coordination among shelter inspectors

Implementing a DHS capital repair program

Eliminated the requirement for school-age children to be present at PATH for multiple appointments

Aligned access procedures for adult families with procedures for families with children

# Recent DHS Reforms

Streamlined access to DYCD shelter for homeless youth through the deployment of youth liaisons at DHS entry points

Deployed social workers to assist families found ineligible who are returning to a community resource to provide on-the-spot assistance

In 2017, 2,323 DHS staff and clients were trained and 2,861 naloxone kits were dispensed by DHS. A total of 777 clients were trained by DHS, DOHMH and NYU.

Communicated more information to clients through flyers, posters and other media to provide information about available assistance and programs

Developed and implemented a procedure to bypass intake for Youth aging out from DYCD and coming to DHS shelter

Added ThriveNYC in Adult Mental Health Shelters

Increased safety in shelters through an NYPD management review and retraining program

Ended the use of more than 1,500 cluster units as shelter, reducing citywide cluster use by 42 percent and counting

Announced 17 high-quality borough-based shelters, 11 of which have already opened their doors, offering New Yorkers in need the opportunity to get back on their feet nearer to the anchors of their lives

**Thank you!**



# RESULTS

- We've **gotten out of 100 locations** bringing our shelter footprint from the 647 buildings we reported in the Turning the Tide plan a year ago to our current use of 547 buildings – a **16 percent reduction in one year**.
  - Including reducing the use of clusters by nearly 50 percent.
  - And siting 17 new borough-based shelters, with 11 already operating.
- **Evictions dropped by 27 percent** and more than 70,000 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes – while we expanded tenant legal services and rent arrears payments.
- Helped **1,480 people come in from the streets** into transitional programs or permanent housing. And today those 1,480 individuals remain off the streets.
- Creating and implementing rental assistance programs and restoring Section 8 and New York City Housing Authority priorities which through March 2018 **helped 87,300 children and adults move out of, or avert entry into, shelter**.
- The **DHS shelter census for 2017 remained roughly flat** compared to 2016 – this is the first time in more than a decade that the DHS census has remained level.



May 15, 2018

Testimony of Daniel Nigro, Commissioner, FDNY

**Executive Budget Hearing**

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Good morning Chair Borelli, Chair Dromm, and all of the Council Members present. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 for the Fire Department. I am joined this morning by First Deputy Commissioner Laura Kavanagh, Chief of Operations John Sudnik, Chief of EMS James Booth, and Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance Stephen Rush.

I would like to acknowledge at the outset of this hearing great losses suffered by the Department. Since I appeared before this committee in March, three brave members of the Department died while serving our city and country. Fire Marshal Christopher "Tripp" Zanetis and Firefighter Christopher Raguso, both members of the Air National Guard, were killed on March 15th when their helicopter crashed in Iraq. Lieutenant Michael Davidson died on March 22nd after suffering critical injuries while operating at a fire in Harlem. Their names will be forever linked with service, honor, and above all else, bravery.

The Fire Department has always received great support from Mayor de Blasio, and the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 19 is no exception. This budget continues to fund the Department at levels that will enable us to effectively serve the people of New York, and it funds initiatives that will help us improve the level of service that we provide. Included in this budget is funding in FY19 and FY20 for Phase II of the Firefighter Candidate Tracking System, which will provide analytical tools for the Department to assess the candidate screening process and more easily track candidates as they progress through the various stages of the recruitment and hiring process. The new system will lead to an application process that flows more smoothly for both the Department and the candidates.

This funding will also be used to develop a candidate portal. This feature will allow candidates to see appointments, mentorship programming, view their progress through the process, and communicate with their assigned investigator. As this committee is aware, under my administration, we have put a great deal of resources into our recruitment process, creating a program that has produced the most diverse group of firefighter exam test takers in the history of the Department, and we will continue improving that effort in future campaigns. But simply recruiting quality candidates is not enough. We recognize that the application process to become a firefighter is longer and more involved than many other jobs. This funding will create a better candidate experience and help us to complete that process in as streamlined a manner as possible.

The 2019 Executive Budget also funds an assessment and validation of our EMS Physical Agility Test. The Physical Agility Test measures a candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of an FDNY EMT or paramedic that are physical in nature. The realities of this physically demanding work led us to undertake a review of our own testing



May 15, 2018

Testimony of Daniel Nigro, Commissioner, FDNY  
Executive Budget Hearing

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procedure to ensure that our EMTs and paramedics can perform the physical aspects of the job. This funding will allow us to engage experts to conduct a professional assessment.

The Fire Department also received funding in this Executive Budget for a civilianization program, which will fill administrative non-field assignments currently staffed with uniformed personnel with appropriate civilian staff, allowing the uniformed personnel to be redeployed to the field. We are still in the process of identifying specific areas where this program will apply, but we believe that it will allow us to more effectively utilize our uniformed workforce and ultimately save money for the taxpayers.

Following a number of serious fires over the last few months, we have proactively enhanced our already aggressive outreach program to educate members of the community about fire safety. FDNY fire safety teams educate the public on critical lifesaving strategies that focus on fire prevention. They work with community groups, elected officials, schools, senior centers, and our fellow city agencies, placing a special focus on the City's most vulnerable populations and at-risk communities. The Fire Safety Education unit conducted approximately 3,300 education presentations in the first four months of this year. That's a 54% increase in presentations over the same period of time in 2017. Approximately 156,000 New Yorkers attended such a program.

We also have a large number of events planned for the near future. We are coordinating with NYC Emergency Management on several upcoming fire safety and emergency preparedness events throughout the Bronx in May and June. We're currently working with the Department of Youth and Community Development to coordinate visits for 2,000 young New Yorkers to 55 firehouses around the city in June with the goal of teaching fire and life safety. We will also be hosting our popular citywide open houses in fire houses and EMS stations across the city on June 16th and 17th. This year will be our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual event, and we will be placing a focus on fire safety and distributing 25,000 free smoke alarms.

We know that we can amplify our message by working with partners. To this end, we are currently in the process of coordinating meetings with a large number of clergy and faith-based groups. We already work with these groups throughout the year, and we know that training members of the clergy in fire safety and giving them materials to distribute at their houses of worship will help spread our message to congregations across the city. We're also working with the Department of Education to explore a greater number of opportunities to educate both students and parents about fire safety. We target schools that we have identified as having a high percentage of fire deaths or injuries in their geographic area and conduct presentations and distribute educational materials. We're coordinating with the Department for the Aging to broaden our outreach to senior-focused



May 15, 2018  
Testimony of Daniel Nigro, Commissioner, FDNY  
**Executive Budget Hearing**

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facilities and with the New York City Housing Authority's Resident Engagement Unit to schedule presentations with tenant associations in the NYCHA developments.

These events are in addition to our regular, ongoing fire safety initiatives. For example, whenever a fatal fire occurs, we dispatch a team of fire safety educators to the immediate area of the incident within 48 hours to perform public outreach. These teams emphasize fire safety themes related to the cause of the fire (if known) and make fire and carbon monoxide alarms available to members of the public at no cost. They subsequently set up presentations with the local community board and attend several meetings to discuss fire safety. Another regular event is our Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries campaign which takes place twice a year. For the entire week in which Daylight Savings takes place, we send fire safety educators to 45 locations across the city to distribute approximately 40,000 batteries free of charge. We conduct similarly broad outreach each year during Fire Prevention Week in October.

To supplement all of our in-person outreach, FDNY's Bureau of Public Information has drastically augmented our social media presence in recent years. Since December 2017, fire and life safety messaging on FDNY social media has been viewed 17 million times. That represents a 49% increase from the same period last year. We have filmed and published 24 Public Safety Announcements (PSAs), including ones that are part of the "Close the Door" campaign that we launched in the wake of a fire in the Bronx that resulted in the death of 13 people. To date, the PSAs have garnered two million views. We recently completed filming on 18 additional PSAs which will be published on social media between now and the end of the year. Fire safety messaging is shared to Twitter multiple times each week and to Instagram and Facebook on a regular basis. We share messaging specific to the current season or upcoming holiday, as well as consistent fire safety messaging that doesn't change regardless of the time of year.

We have many partners in our fight to make New York as safe as possible, but none more important than the people of this city. It is our privilege to serve them. We thank the Committee and the entire City Council for its ongoing support for our mission. I would be happy to take your questions at this time.

## **FDNY Uniformed Fire Protection Inspectors**

The New York City Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention is a life safety and revenue producing Bureau, generating approximately **85 million dollars** annually for the Department.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention members consists of **360** Fire Protection Inspectors in inspectional units which check for compliance of all Fire and Building Code regulations directly related to fire safety. Fire Protection Inspectors are tasked to inspect and witness testing of safety equipment in buildings for firefighting operations, such as standpipe systems, sprinkler systems, etc. at various locations throughout NYC, including our bridges, tunnels, piers, roof top ladders, subways, constructions sites, restaurants and basements in commercial and residential hi-rise buildings. Fire Protection Inspectors make sure the systems used for firefighting operations on premises are in working order, plus protecting the lives and property of City residents, employees and visitors. The effort of the Fire Protection Inspectors over the past several years has resulted in a significant reduction of fires and deaths related to fires at a record low in the history of the fire department within the five boroughs of the City of New York.

The FDNY Headquarters Unit is staffed with Uniformed Fire Inspectors conducting life safety code inspections that include, but are not limited to the following:

- Conduct fire code safety inspections for any premise(s) throughout New York City that store, handle, or use flammable, combustible mixture and/or liquids,
- Conduct fire code safety inspections for any premise(s) throughout New York City that store, handle, or use flammable, combustible compress gases.
- Conduct the Annual fire safety maintenance inspection on all approved fire suppressions systems installed in commercial kitchens in the City of New York.
- Conduct life safety inspections at street fairs and places of special events to ensure that entities comply with all city regulations in regards to the storage of flammable gases and liquid; storage of combustible mixtures/liquids located at street fairs or places of special events.

The Headquarters Inspection Group is divided into several units within the Bureau including Fire Suppression, Rangehood, Bulk Fuel Safety, High Rise, Public Buildings, License Public Place of Assembly, Construction Demolition and Abatement, Explosives, Fire Alarm Inspection, Fireworks Safety, Hazardous Cargo, Central Station Signal and Field Public Operations, respectively.

1. **Fire Suppression Unit** – This unit conducts inspections and check for code compliance of the installation and maintenance of Sprinkler and Standpipe systems and/or similar type fire suppression system. Additionally, since the fire on the Queens Borough Bridge, the Bureau of Fire Prevention, Fire Suppression Unit has inherited the task of testing bridges and tunnels in New York City. To test fire suppression systems in tunnels and bridges, it coordinates with the local fire units and the New York City Department of Transportation, New York City Transit Authority and AMTRAK.
2. **Range-Hood Unit** – This Unit conducts inspections and check for code compliance of the installation of fire suppression systems installed on commercial cooking equipment(s).

3. **Bulk Fuel Safety Unit** – This Unit conducts inspections and check for code compliance of the installation of underground storage tanks containing flammable and/or volatile inflammable oils. Conducts the annually Buckeye Pipeline Drills with FDNY Divisions and Fire Units, Conducts inspections of the following facilities that include but is not limited to: all Gas Stations even after there is a fire to determine the cause, Bulk Oil facilities, Key span, C.N.G. facilities, new construction and testing of new equipment.
4. **High Rise Unit** – This Unit conduct life safety inspections on all office and hotel occupancies in New York City that are requirements of Local Law 5, Local Law 16, Local Law 58, Fire Code and Building Code regulations. Since the unfortunate casualties of 9-11, the High Rise Unit will be testing certified Fire Safety Directors to certify them as Emergency Action Plan Directors pursuant to new regulations that was enacted, including active shooter.. The High Rise Unit will also be responsible for enforcing several new life safety code requirements that was enacted as a result of 9-11 currently known as Local Law 26 and the new (E.A.P) Emergency Action Plans.
5. **Public Building Unit** – This Unit conduct life safety inspections on building(s) classified as shelters for the homeless; closely monitors life safety inspections of schools conducted by the local field units and is a liaison to other City Agencies that may be in violation of any fire code violations.
6. **License Public Place of Assembly (LPPA)** – This Unit conduct life safety inspections on any premises that congregate more than 75 persons in one space and check for compliance numerous Fire and Building Code regulations pertaining to that premise(s). Additionally this unit also inspects places at of public gathering consisting of supervising fire inspectors and fire lieutenants enforcing code deficiencies during night time.
7. **Explosive Unit** – The Explosive Unit conducts life safety inspections and supervises any location(s) that use of explosive material. Also, this Unit supervises the display of special effects fireworks usually conducted inside of premises.
8. **Fireworks Safety Unit** – This Unit consist of specially trained Inspectors that conduct site safety inspections at any location that requires a permit for fireworks display in the City of New York such as the famous Macy's Fireworks and Coney Island Fireworks.
9. **Field Public Operations Support Unit** – This Unit enforces premises that has been vacated and/or vacated and sealed by the Fire Department. This Unit is also a complaint Unit and acts as a liaison between the public and Department field units (Fire Divisions and Firehouses) and City Wide S.R.O task force.
10. **Construction Demolition and Abatement Unit (CDA)** – This is a specialized unit initiated by the Mayors Office and the Department that conducts coordinated fire safety inspections on all buildings under construction or demolition stages in the City of New York including non-jurisdictional buildings.

Post 30-day inspections from the Fire Units, the CDA Unit is tasked with inspecting buildings 75' or more to ensure fire safety and building code requirements on premises that include, but is not limited to the following:

- Ensure all egress and exits are in place and unobstructed.



## FIRE PROTECTION INSPECTOR

FDNY Fire Protection Inspectors (FPIs) are tasked to inspect and witness testing of safety equipment in buildings for Firefighters, such as Standpipes systems, sprinkler systems etc. at various locations throughout NYC, including our bridges, tunnels, piers, roof top ladders, subways, construction sites, basements in commercial and residential high rise buildings . Fire Protection Inspectors make sure the systems used for Firefighting operations on premises are in working order, plus protecting the lives and property of City residents, employees and visitors.



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: FDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Barth, Chief of EMS

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: FDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dan Nigro, Fire Commissioner

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: FDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center



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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Sudnik, Chief of Operations

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: EDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephen Rush, AC for Budget

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: EDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/15/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nafeesah Noonan

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

I represent: EDNY

Address: 9 Metrotech Center

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5-15-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Hansell, Commissioner

Address: 150 William Street

I represent: NYC Admin. for Children's Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5-15-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Felipe Franco, Deputy Commissioner

Address: 150 William Street

I represent: NYC Admin. for Children's Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5-15-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorelei Vargas, Deputy Commissioner

Address: 150 William Street

I represent: NYC Admin. Children's Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5-15-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Parrish, Deputy Commissioner

Address: 150 William Street

I represent: NYC Admin for Children's Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Erin Villari, Deputy Commissioner Finance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosine Ferdinand, Deputy Commissioner Budget

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joslyn Carter, Administrator

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DHS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Molly Murphy, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Commissioner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Steven Banks, Commissioner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Grace Bonilla, Administrator

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: HRA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Levine, Chief Program Planning +

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Financial Managerial

I represent: DSS Officer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Scott French, Chief of Staff

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms