



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** March 11, 2016

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR'S FUND TO ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY SELECTS 14 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS CITYWIDE TO JOIN \$30 MILLION CONNECTIONS TO CARE PARTNERSHIP**

*Organizations will work with mental health providers to train nearly 1,000 staff members to provide mental health support*

*Connections to Care expected to serve more than 40,000 New Yorkers over next five years*

*Ford Foundation to commit \$2 million to Connections to Care evaluation*

**NEW YORK**—Fourteen community organizations have been selected to receive grants to partner with mental health providers, train staff and improve access to mental health care in their communities through the Connections to Care program, as part of [ThriveNYC](#). The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, in collaboration with the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, selected the organizations. Connections to Care is a \$30 million public-private partnership that aims to expand access to mental health services by integrating evidence-based mental health support into social services programs serving low-income New Yorkers. It is also a program of the federal Social Innovation Fund of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Mayor's Fund also announced today that the Ford Foundation has awarded a \$2 million, three-year grant to the Connections to Care initiative. This funding will support an evaluation of the program by the RAND Corporation with the NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research.

“Mental health challenges touch every family, in every neighborhood, in every borough. The good news is that mental health problems are treatable. But far too many people are unable to access the services that would help them get well,” said **First Lady and Mayor's Fund Board Chair Chirlane McCray, who is spearheading ThriveNYC, the city's \$850 million mental health package.** “That's why, in New York City, we are taking an innovative approach to expand access to mental health care. By partnering with community leaders and community organizations, we will be able to provide services where people already are – where they live, work, worship and study, and get those services from people they already trust. This approach is a game changer and one of the ways we will help New Yorkers on the path to wellness.”

“The success of any public health campaign hinges on sharing leadership with communities, and that is especially true of ThriveNYC,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery**. “If we are going to bridge the gap between what people need and what they get, we have to bring much-needed mental health services to the community organizations that New Yorkers already know and trust.”

“This program is grounded in the issues central to challenging inequality and breaking down barriers to justice. Mental health cuts across so many of the issues we work on as a social justice foundation, such as criminal justice reform and housing,” said **Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation**. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio, First Lady McCray and the City of New York for taking on this critical and complex issue and ensuring learning and innovating along the way of this endeavor to achieve maximum impact in transforming lives and communities.”

“Through Connections to Care, New Yorkers are taking an innovative step forward in solving one of today’s most pressing social problems – an accessible mental health system,” said **Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that administers the Social Innovation Fund**. “I am pleased to see our partnership with the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City expand across these 14 community-organizations awarded today, and I applaud their commitment to helping more than 40,000 New Yorkers lead healthier, happier lives.”

Social service staff at 14 community-based organizations serving every borough will receive training from local mental health providers to offer non-clinical mental health support to clients in three target populations: expectant parents and/or parents of children up to the age of four; out of school and out of work young adults ages 16 to 24; and/or unemployed or underemployed adults ages 18 and over.

Over the next five years, the mental health providers are expected to train nearly 1,000 staff members at community-based organizations to offer mental health services in non-clinical settings, serving 8,600 New Yorkers per year. In total, Connections to Care is expected to serve more than 40,000 New Yorkers in five years.

[Launched last July](#), Connections to Care is the largest public-private partnership outlined in ThriveNYC, and it is one of the largest public-private initiatives in the history of the Mayor’s Fund.

“Access to mental health services is a basic human right. By partnering with local organizations that have strong community ties, we can ensure more New Yorkers can access these invaluable services,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**.

“I am very happy to see all the work of Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray resulting in a network that will be paying attention to the mental health needs of New York citizens. Red Hook Initiative and Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration and their medical counterparts, at opposite ends of my District, will prove to be excellent providers of these services,” said **State Senator Velmanette Montgomery**.

“Whole healthcare means more than just treating physical illness. ThriveNYC is an important step toward a more effective and holistic system in support of the mental well-being of New Yorkers,” said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, Chair of the Committee on Health**. “With the leadership of New York City's First Lady Chirlane McCray, and Executive Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health Dr. Gary Belkin, this new funding will play a critical role in supporting the community-based organizations that do this important work.”

“I welcome First Lady Chirlane McCray to Red Hook to announce \$30 million in funding for Community Based Organizations through the Connections to Care program,” said **Assistant Assembly Speaker Felix W. Ortiz**. “This federal social innovation grant represents a major step forward for the Red Hook Initiative that will now be able to help train staff and better identify young people between 16 and 24 who are in need of mental health counseling. This is a need that we’ve waited over a decade to address and can now properly fund. The Red Hook Initiative will partner with our Sunset Park-based NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers to make this new effort a success. I wish both organizations the best of success.”

“Gaining access to necessary mental health services is a struggle for too many New Yorkers. The implementation of the Connections to Care program will help integrate these services into programs that serve our most vulnerable communities and transform the delivery of our mental health services. Thank you First Lady Chirlane McCray and Mayor de Blasio for making this partnership a reality,” said **Council Member Andrew Cohen, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health**.

“For too long, mental health care has been out of reach for many New Yorkers, particularly those who are low income,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the Committee on Health**. “Integrating mental health services into existing programs is a smart approach. Programs like this are key to expanding mental health care to all, and I thank First Lady Chirlane McCray and Foundation President Darren Walker for their leadership on this important issue.”

“Connections to Care and the funding behind it demonstrate a true commitment from the Mayor’s Office to expand access to mental health services to low-income New Yorkers, who struggle the most to find and afford these services. Integrating mental health services into already successful social services programs is brilliant and will no doubt help low-income New Yorkers heal and live stable and productive lives,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

“Connections to Care is a critical part of our city’s efforts to establish a national model in the fight against the mental health crisis,” said **Gabrielle Fialkoff, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Partnerships**. “With the range of our community-based organizations and the resources of generous partners like the Ford Foundation, we are paving a pathway to bring crucial access to mental health services to our most vulnerable New Yorkers. It is with this spirit of innovation and collaboration that New York City will continue to lead in developing tangible solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of our time.”

“Connecting New Yorkers to vital mental health services begins in the community where they live, work, play and love,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “These fourteen community based organizations will serve as gateways to ‘Connections to Care,’ and they will

improve access to critical mental health services for expectant parents, young parents, out of work young adults and unemployed adults.”

“ThriveNYC is helping to create equity in the availability of mental health services for New Yorkers in need. Connections to Care represents the largest public-private partnership in the ThriveNYC initiative, which will bring much-needed mental health services to communities across the City,” said **Mindy Tarlow, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Operations.**

“The Mayor’s Fund is proud to be partnering with such a diverse group of community-based organizations committed to launching and testing new ways of bringing mental health services into our neighborhoods,” said **Darren Bloch, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City.** “Through Connections to Care, we look forward to learning more about how we can embrace the strength of these community cornerstones to improve our mental health system and share our successes with other organizations across our city and across the nation.”

“The organizations participating in Connections to Care are adding mental health services to their current strategies for helping New Yorkers access new opportunities,” said **Matthew Klein, Executive Director of the Center for Economic Opportunity.** “The Center for Economic Opportunity is grateful for the partnership with the Social Innovation Fund, the Ford Foundation and other funders who are helping to build evidence about the best ways to integrate mental health and social services to achieve success for clients.”

“Young parents and people out of work no matter what age can be very vulnerable to clinical depression and other types of mental health issues. This funding to 14 community based organizations throughout New York City will support 1,000 staff members. They’ll receive the specialized training they need to better identify those who require additional mental health support, resources and referrals. This cutting-edge training will act as a safety net. It provides for a stronger approach in identifying someone’s condition so they can obtain the necessary treatment earlier,” said **Damian Thorman, Director of the Social Innovation Fund, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service.**

“In the 14 years that Red Hook Initiative has been serving youth and families in Red Hook there has always been an unmet need for high-quality, culturally competent mental health care. Young people and families have suffered in the absence of care. Today, we are proud to partner with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers to bring these desperately needed services to Red Hook. We look forward to training our staff, a majority of whom are Red Hook residents, to be the team on the ground connecting youth to these life changing services,” said **Jill Eisenhard, Founder and Executive Director of the Red Hook Initiative.**

“As a community-based mental health provider serving South Brooklyn for the past 45 years, NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers knows the incredible successes that individuals can achieve when their mental health is addressed and cared for. We also know the barriers and challenges that individuals face in accessing these important services. We applaud the NYC Mayor’s Fund and the Corporation for National and Community Service’s Social Innovation Fund for their leadership in bringing mental health services into the heart of community,” said

**Dr. Tomas Cruz, Vice President of Ambulatory Behavioral Health Services at NYU LFHC, which will partner with the Red Hook Initiative to implement Connections to Care.**

All community-based organizations were selected from a competitive [Request for Proposals](#) across New York City, which was released last September. In order to apply to participate in Connections to Care, community-based organizations were required to be 501(c)(3) nonprofits operating in New York City and to develop their plans with a mental health provider.

All community-based organizations implementing Connections to Care will train non-mental health staff to provide non-clinical support for common mental health conditions. This support will include four approaches that research demonstrates non-clinical staff can effectively provide: screenings for common mental health and substance use disorders; motivational interviewing, or treatment that facilitates changes in behaviors that impact mental health; mental health first aid, which teaches the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance abuse; and psychoeducation, which provides individuals with a mental health condition and their families with information to understand and deal with the condition.

The mental health providers will deliver training in all the above to staff at the community-based organizations. Training will include workshops and classes according to industry guidelines, as well as ongoing support, coaching and quality assurance. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is also offering mental health first aid training to community-based organizations and mental health providers.

Along with providing training, the mental health partner will also assist in the provision of direct care to clients in need of more intensive mental health care than can be provided at the community-based organization.

All community-based organizations will launch their training within 90 days.

Additional information on the selected community-based organizations is available [here](#).

Connections to Care is funded in part by an initial three-year award of \$6 million from the Social Innovation Fund of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Mayor's Fund will be eligible for an additional \$4 million in funding for the fourth and fifth years of the program. The grant will be matched by an additional \$20 million in private funding. \$10 million will be provided by the community-based organizations, which must match the grant that they receive from the Mayor's Fund. The remaining \$10 million will be raised by the Mayor's Fund. Along with the Ford Foundation, additional early program funding partners include the Chapman Perelman Foundation, the Benificus Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Dr. Marilyn Simons of the Simons Foundation.

By increasing access to mental health services over the next five years, Connections to Care aims to improve the mental health of participants, and in turn, increase participants' success with other social services provided by the community-based organization. To determine if these goals are met, the Mayor's Fund has selected the RAND Corporation with the NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research to evaluate the program, asking if Connections to Care:

- Reduces self-reported mental health-related symptoms such as depression, anxiety, reactivity and substance abuse;
- Reduces in hospitalizations and emergency room use;
- Improves self-reported quality of life and/or social and family relationships;
- Leads participants to continue with prescribed psychotropic medications and/or therapy;
- Decreases participant perception of stigma in accessing mental health services;
- Improves outcomes for participants in specific social services:
  - **For expectant mothers and parents of children under the age of four:** Improvement in parent-child interactions; improvement in health social and emotional development in young children; and improvement in maternal depression.
  - **For out of school, out of work young adults ages 16 to 24:** Improved job placement rates, retention and earnings; and reconnection with school, grade gains, high school equivalency attainment and postsecondary enrollment.
  - **For unemployed and underemployed low-income working-age adults ages 18 and over:** Positive employment outcomes, including job placement rates, retention, and earnings.

RAND and McSilver will also study best practices developed and challenges encountered by the community-based organizations in implementing the Connections to Care model and the overall costs of the program. The lessons learned will inform potentially larger-scale expansions and replications in the future.

**Connections to Care: Subgrantees Breakdown**

<b>Community-Based Organization</b>	<b>Mental Health Partner</b>	<b>Primary Target Population</b>
Arab American Association of New York	NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers	All
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation	Brooklyn Community Services	Unemployed/Underemployed Adults
CAMBA	Jewish Board of Children & Family Services	Parents of Young Children
Center for Employment Opportunities	CASES	Unemployed/Underemployed Adults
Committee for Hispanic Children & Families	Comunilife	Parents of Young Children & Unemployed/Underemployed Adults
Hetrick-Martin Institute	Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center	Out of School, Out of Work Youth
Hudson Guild	Hudson Guild Paula Balser Counseling Center	Parents of Young Children

Red Hook Initiative	NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers	Out of School, Out of Work Youth
Safe Horizon	Safe Horizon Counseling Center	Parents of Young Children
Sheltering Arms Children & Family Services	Safe Space	Parents of Young Children
STRIVE International	Union Settlement Association and Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work	Unemployed/Underemployed Adults
The Door	University Settlement	Out of School, Out of Work Youth
The HOPE Program	Brookdale University Hospital	Unemployed/Underemployed Adults
Voces Latinas	Catholic Charities of Brooklyn & Queens	Parents of Young Children & Out of School, Out of Work Youth

#### **Number of Community-Based Organizations Serving Residents in Each Borough**

- Brooklyn – **8**
- Bronx – **6**
- Manhattan – **7**
- Queens – **7**
- Staten Island – **4**

Some organizations will serve multiple boroughs.

#### **About the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City**

The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, chaired by First Lady Chirlane McCray, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization committed to promoting partnerships between the City and the private sector in support of high-impact public programs. The Mayor’s Fund is focused on serving as a vehicle for the generous business and philanthropic communities to contribute to City programs and enhance the lives of New Yorkers in areas ranging from mental health, to youth workforce development, to immigration and citizenship. To learn more about the Mayor’s Fund, visit [nyc.gov/fund](http://nyc.gov/fund).

#### **About the Social Innovation Fund of the Corporation for National and Community Service**

The Social Innovation Fund is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency for volunteering and service programs. The SIF fosters public and private collaborations to evaluate and grow innovative community-based solutions that work. In just five years, the SIF and its private-sector partners have invested more than \$876 million dollars in compelling community solutions. As a result of \$295 million in federal grants, and more than \$581 million in non-federal match commitments, the SIF has made grants to 39

institutions and 353 nonprofits working in 40 states and the District of Columbia.

**About the Center for Economic Opportunity**

The Center for Economic Opportunity works to reduce poverty and advance evidence-based policy in New York City through research, program design, monitoring and evaluation. Part of the Mayor's Office of Operations, CEO manages a dedicated annual Innovation Fund and works collaboratively with City agencies and other partners to create, implement and oversee a range of anti-poverty programs, policies and research projects. CEO's in-house evaluation team works with nationally recognized, independent evaluation firms and City agencies to rigorously measure program impacts and provide objective evidence to inform decisions of whether to replicate, eliminate or scale up programs. CEO oversees implementation and evaluation of New York City's 2010-2015 SIF grant.

**About the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

The mission of DOHMH is to protect and promote the health of all New Yorkers. DOHMH has the overall responsibility for the health of the residents of New York City. It also acts as an oversight agency to monitor various healthcare related operations within New York City.

###