



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov, (212) 341-0999
centenolo@hra.nyc.gov, (929) 221-5131

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES LAUNCH A HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVE IN EAST NEW YORK

New initiative aims to reduce the number of families at risk of entering homeless shelters citywide with ACS Preventive Provider Staff being trained in Homebase program

New York, NY – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) today launched a **Homelessness Prevention Initiative** at Catholic Charities in East New York, Brooklyn to ensure that families receiving ACS' preventive services and experiencing housing instability are connected to the city's homelessness prevention resources and avoid homeless shelter entry whenever possible. Over ten ACS preventive services provider staff were trained by DSS homelessness prevention staff on programs and services for at-risk families.

ACS partners with community organizations to provide preventive services designed to support and strengthen at-risk families with the resources and tools they need to thrive to prevent entry in the city's foster care system. These services range from domestic violence intervention, substance misuse treatment, parenting classes and mental health counseling.

A significant number of families receiving ACS preventive services experience housing instability and this initiative will help ACS preventive services providers to connect families to DSS's homelessness prevention program. This initiative follows an ongoing commitment by ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell and DSS Commissioner Steven Banks to enhance communication between the agencies to better serve ACS-involved families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

This new initiative will better serve ACS-involved families by offering a variety of DSS and ACS housing resources to ACS preventive providers serving families living in East New York, drawing a distinct connection between DSS's Homelessness Prevention Programs (known as "Homebase") and ACS' Division of Preventive Services (DPS). Through this training, ACS Preventive Services provider staff will learn about the services available through Homebase,

which are focused on preventing homelessness and include but are not limited to: tenant/landlord mediation, budgeting/financial empowerment, and relocation assistance workshops.

“Housing is a critical pillar for family stability,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “We recognize that families who are experiencing or on the brink of homelessness are particularly vulnerable. More than 20 percent of families in the homeless system have some sort of child welfare involvement. By working together with DSS and our preventive services providers like Catholic Charities, we can make sure that more families can stay in their homes and get the support they need to raise their children.”

“Maintaining stable housing and preventing shelter entry are not only vital to the welfare of families and children, they are also crucial components of our plan for addressing homelessness in New York City,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “By matching the housing expertise of a community Homebase program like the one run by Catholic Charities with the family supports offered by the ACS preventive services providers, we will be able to work collaboratively to identify families most at-risk and more effectively assist them to avoid entering shelter.”

“As a long time provider of homelessness prevention and preventive services for families in Brooklyn and Queens, Catholic Charities has historically provided a continuity of service for each family, ensuring that their needs are addressed in one process, said **Monsignor Alfred LoPinto, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens and related agencies**. “Catholic Charities purposefully co-locates our Homebase and ACS Prevention programs in each borough to enhance this collaboration. By working collaboratively, we are able to foster and support the strengths of each family. Catholic Charities is excited to be part of the ACS-DSS Initiative in East New York, and we look forward to enriching our partnership. Catholic Charities will also be providing and facilitating training to other ACS Prevention programs’ front-line staff with the goal of further fortifying families in New York City.”

The Homeless Prevention Initiative will also identify and address any administrative barriers to homelessness prevention, and develop training and reference materials for ACS Preventive Services staff to support and assist families in finding stable housing. In 2018, the initiative—now in pilot phase—is expected to expand the newly-developed trainings citywide.

ACS and DSS are also developing a research-based screening tool for ACS preventive providers to use that will help quickly identify families facing a housing crisis that can lead to shelter entry and then connect them to the services that can prevent homelessness.

About the New York City Administration for Children’s Services:

The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City’s children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster

care services for children not able to safely remain at home. ACS is aggressively implementing a [Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#) to improve outcomes for children in foster care. The most recent status report indicates a 25% increase in children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship, and a 5% increase in children adopted from FY 2015 to FY 2016, even as the overall number of children in foster care continued to decline, among other significant progress made to improve case practice and outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care.

For more information about NYC ACS, please visit www.nyc.gov/acs

About the Department of Social Services

The New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA/DSS) is dedicated to fighting poverty and income inequality by providing New Yorkers in need with essential benefits. With over 14,000 employees, HRA helps more than three million New Yorkers annually with services like food assistance, cash assistance, emergency rental and utility assistance, job placement and training, public health insurance, child care, adult protective services, domestic violence shelter and assistance, HIV/AIDS support services, child support enforcement, and legal services. HRA's committed staff works every day to fight poverty, improve services, meet the changing needs of clients and ensure program integrity.

For more information about NYC HRA, please visit www.nyc.gov/hra

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