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ACS UNVEILS NEW CAR-SHARING TECHNOLOGY PLAN TO HELP FRONTLINE STAFF RESPOND QUICKLY TO POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT CASES

Following an agency-wide transportation review, ACS hit the gas on faster transpo plan to help frontline caseworkers respond quickly; Plan includes enhanced vehicle availability & technology improvements

Zipcar's Local Motion Technology will help frontline workers make initial home visits quickly after child abuse/neglect reports--will provide 24/7 access to vehicles

New York, NY – Today, Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced expanded transportation options that will enable frontline child-protective staff to respond even more quickly to reports of child abuse or neglect. As part of the new plan, ACS will begin using Zipcar's Local Motion technology, which will let Child Protective Specialists immediately find and reserve cars online, with 24/7 access.

Every year, frontline ACS staff investigate about 60,000 abuse or neglect reports that are called into the state hotline – and getting to homes quickly for an initial visit is key to securing children's safety. Many abuse and neglect reports are called in at night, over weekends, or on holidays, and they are dispersed across the more than 300 square miles of New York City's five boroughs. Over the last year, ACS has surveyed staff and researched best practices in other cities and industries in order to expand transportation options that can help Child Protective Specialists respond quickly to reports of child abuse or neglect.

To help frontline staff make initial home visits quickly, ACS has implemented a multi-faceted transportation approach that includes:

- Access to Zipcars that authorized staff can pick up and drop off at locations across the city. More than 650 Child Protective Specialists have already registered to be Zipcar drivers.
- Permits that allow frontline workers to more easily park. More than 250 permit placards are now available to frontline child protection staff to share when using their personal autos for out-of-office assignments. There are also 41 permits currently for use with Zipcars, with an additional 19 new permits being added soon.
- 24/7 access to 50 vehicles, that staff can self-drive when conducting home visits, collateral contact interviews and family meetings.
- Reimbursements for mass transit.
- Increased training for Child Protective Specialists on the full range of transportation options and how to access them. This calendar year, all new frontline CPS have received transportation options training.

Starting this fall, Child Protective Specialists will also have access to Zipcar Local Motion technology, enabling them to quickly reserve city vehicles online before traveling to a home visit. The mobile app and website allow CPS to easily find and book available vehicles with a color-coded LED that shows the status of the vehicle. GPS tracking, vehicle status and detailed usage history will allow managers to monitor the fleet in real-time and ensure that cars are available. With this technology, CPS can unlock and drive any authorized vehicle, day or night. ACS is in the process of equipping more than 50 vehicles with this cloud-based software, which will allow staff to share cars, maximize utilization and streamline operations. Staff using their proximity card will also be able to access a pool of electric vehicles staged City-wide by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

“ACS is committed to keeping children safe throughout the five boroughs, and that's why we are providing enhanced transportation options that will help frontline staff get to homes or other locations quickly when there's a report of abuse or neglect,” said ACS Commissioner David Hansell. “As first responders for child safety, our Child Protective Specialists need to be able to travel immediately--day or night---to reach a child in need. These expanded transportation options will provide on-demand access to vehicles, allowing our CPS to quickly respond to reports of child abuse or neglect and ensure children are safe.”

“We are saving time with these Zipcars, and we're able to accomplish more visits and ensure that children are safe in a shorter time period, said Nicole Dimolfetta who is a child protective specialist on Staten Island. “An added feature that I want to thank Commissioner Hansell for is having access to an EZ-Pass and gas card so staff doesn't have to spend their own money when driving to other boroughs for home visits.”

"Our children are our future, and we must do everything in our power to protect them. Getting to a child in trouble as fast as possible remains a top priority for this City. I commend ACS and Zipcar for creating this initiative to help our youngest, most vulnerable New Yorkers," said Public Advocate Tish James.

"I commend the efforts of Commissioner Hansell and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to increase access to technology and ride sharing for frontline workers. Enhancing transportation options will allow Child Protective Specialists to respond faster to urgent situations and better serve New York's children, " said Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi A.D 28

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. For more information, please visit: www.nyc.gov/acs

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