

**DHS Questions and Requests  
Bronx Community Board 8**

1. Please send the Board the winning RFP that was submitted by AAPCI, and the Environmental Assessment Statement, both referenced during the presentation.

All DSS-DHS shelter locations, including the proposed facility at 6661 Broadway, undergo an environmental assessment study (EAS) before they open. Throughout this process, we work closely with relevant agencies to ensure that each site meets the health, safety and environmental standards mandated by New York State law. To that end, the EAS for this location is currently in process and expected to be completed by early 2022.

2. What qualifications or level of training is there for onsite employees such as security, social workers, case workers, mental health workers? How is staff distributed during day and night?

The not-for-profit service provider at this location (AAPCI) must ensure that all on-site shelter staff, including security, social workers, case workers, and mental health professionals, meet all relevant State and Local Law staffing requirements, including State regulatory requirements. Staffing plans will be made available once the budget and building plans are finalized.

3. Please specify locations of like men’s shelter models where AAPCI has operated a General Shelter of 130 men similar to the model proposed. Are any in the Bronx?

Please see below.

4. If they operate different models i.e., women, families, employed, please provide information. Please send locations for other models that they operate, i.e., Women and children, employed, etc.

Please find a list below of DSS-DHS shelter locations operated by AAPCI across our City:

Shelter Type	Capacity	Location
Single Adult Men	60	Queens
Single Adult Men	80	Brooklyn
Single Adult Men	134	Brooklyn
Single Adult Men	126	Brooklyn
Single Adult Men	176	Brooklyn
Single Adult Women	102	Manhattan
Single Adult Women (Elderly & Reasonable Accommodation)	161	Brooklyn
Domestic Violence Families (men or women with dependent children)	40 families	Brooklyn
Domestic Violence Families (men or women with dependent children)	54 families	Bronx

Recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all approach to homeless services, DSS-DHS operates a number of different shelter facilities based on population type of our clients, providing tailored social services and supports at each of these locations to meet our clients’ individual needs. As indicated in the above chart, AAPCI has a successful track record of operating transitional housing facilities that serve a wide range of clients experiencing homelessness, including single adult New Yorkers, which is the population type that will be served at 6661 Broadway.

5. What, if any enforcement mechanisms are in place for house rules? If the community identifies a resident who is severely disrupting the neighborhood, can that individual be removed from the shelter? Is there a time frame?

A safe and secure environment is critical to the success of any program facility, and DSS-DHS is committed to prioritizing the safety of clients, staff, and community members alike at all our shelter locations across the City. At each one of our high-quality, borough-based transitional housing facilities, including the proposed location at 6661 Broadway, our not-for-profit partners provide on-site security around-the-clock, ensuring that our clients are following facility regulations and “Good Neighbor” policies both in and around the facility. As an added measure, our not-for-profit partners also provide a 24-hour open line for the community to provide feedback in a timely manner and to immediately address any concerns as they arise.

If a client does not abide by the rules and regulations of the facility, DSS-DHS and AAPCI will work directly with the client to attempt to resolve any outstanding challenges or impediments that the client is facing. If resolution cannot be reached, DSS-DHS will transfer the client to an alternative facility where they can receive a different level of support and care.

To that end, under recently passed local legislation, which CM Dinowitz voted in favor of, DSS-DHS is required to provide 48 hours’ notice to all clients prior to initiating a transfer – unless the move is considered an emergency transfer as defined in Local Law.

6. What is your site selection protocol? If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

- Regarding site selection, not-for-profit providers propose new shelters to DSS-DHS through our open-ended RFP process, which means proposals are accepted on a rolling basis. When a proposal is submitted, the quality of the proposal (including the need for the proposed shelter capacity at the location, the viability of the building, the scope of the client services, the experience of the provider, pricing and other operational matters) is evaluated and scored by agency program experts working with the Department of Social Services Contracts Office in accordance with New York City Procurement Policy Board Rules. The proposal is also reviewed by Agency leadership for consistency with the borough-based approach, and the capacity and equitable siting goals that the plan will achieve when it is fully implemented.
- DSS-DHS does not designate locations — rather, we evaluate proposals submitted to our Agency by not-for-profit service providers for use of specific locations as shelter (not the other way around). In order to officially consider and evaluate a location proposed for use as shelter, a response to our open-ended RFP must be submitted by the not-for-profit service provider that intends to implement the program.
- At the point where we receive a proposal, the not-for-profit service provider has determined that they can effectively operate the location as a shelter to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, and the developer, as the sole entity with the authority to make the final determination about how the private property will be used, has determined to work with the service provider in that undertaking. In order to officially consider and evaluate a location proposed for use as shelter, a response to our open-ended RFP must first be submitted by the not-for-profit service provider that intends to implement the program.
- Communities have input in site selection by identifying viable sites that not-for-profit providers can propose to us through the open-ended RFP procurement process. Commissioner Banks has made that offer in public forums, in private meetings, in the 2017 Turning the Tide plan itself, and in letters in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 to Community Boards and Council Members, and other elected officials across the five boroughs, emphasizing that as we work to phase out the use of cluster apartments first, followed by commercial hotels, and revamp the shelter system with our new borough-based approach, we have brought commercial hotels under contract during the phase-out period and are simultaneously asking communities to proactively help us identify sites for new shelters, which would allow the City to save a total of \$100 million per

year if we utilize only shelters and end the practice of using hotels:  
<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/city-invites-elected-officials-find-new-homeless-shelter-sites-article-1.3893180>

7. How is this project funded (city, state, federal)?

The project will be funded by City and State funds under a social service contract between DSS-DHS and AAPCI.

8. What is the fiduciary and contractual relationship between AAPCI, Court Square Real Estate, and DHS relating to buying the property, constructing the building, owning and maintaining the building, and the role of DHS. When can we have the contracts?

AAPCI will be the not-for-profit owner, developer and operator of the proposed shelter facility at 6661 Broadway and DSS-DHS will contract with AAPCI to that end. On November 16, a public hearing was held by the City regarding the draft contract. As part of the process of converting this location into a high-quality shelter with services, AAPCI will acquire and develop the facility with relevant construction and real estate expertise provided by Court Square Real Estate. AAPCI will be responsible for maintaining the building over the longer-term.

9. What city, state, or federal approvals are necessary? What approvals have been obtained?

When DSS-DHS approves a proposal for shelter, the only result we will accept is a finished product that is ready for occupancy, operated by a qualified not-for-profit provider-partner, offering the services and supports that meet the high standards we seek to provide to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. To that end, as with all DSS-DHS facilities, we will ensure that the facility meets all DOB, FDNY, and other relevant local/State regulations and policies, while including adequate provisions for each client. Prior to opening, State OTDA must issue an operating certificate to the provider and the Coalition for the Homeless inspects for compliance with the right to shelter consent decree.

10. When will building plans be available?

The project's building plans are in the initial development stages and will be made available at a later date, as they are firmed up.

11. How is AAPCI's budget for management and staff salaries broken down?

The project's budget for shelter management and shelter staff salaries are subject to standards established by the DSS-DHS Fiscal Cost Manual.

12. Are there funds allotted for services provided by other not for profits or organizations?

All on-site services are provided by AAPCI and covered via our contract with the organization to operate the shelter facility.

13. What does AAPCI advise those residents to do who fail to return before curfew?

There is a 10:00PM curfew at all shelter facilities serving single adult New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, including those clients residing at 6661 Broadway. Clients who are employed with late work hours will receive passes to return to the facility after curfew based on their documented work schedule. Clients who miss curfew may be subject to losing their placement at the facility. In those instances, DSS-DHS will work with AAPCI to identify an alternative placement. No client will be turned out on the streets.

#### 14. Are Covid vaccinations mandated for residents and staff?

##### Clients

- In New York, there is a court-ordered right-to-shelter for all New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, which requires the City to provide shelter to all those who need it, regardless of background, including vaccination status – because no person should be turned out into the street, period. However, at DSS-DHS, we have endeavored to make it as easy as possible for clients to get vaccinated, including by establishing direct-delivery programs that have brought COVID-19 vaccines directly to where clients are residing in shelter:
  - First, we first established a dedicated vaccine hub site for clients and staff to get vaccinated. Then, based on our effective COVID testing blueprint, we also implemented a similar proactive, mobile vaccine program, delivering free vaccines directly to shelters where our clients reside, which has continued to help keep COVID rates low and save lives. While our initial focus was on adults, who have been at the center of our response (as adult individuals often could not isolate or socially distance in congregate shelter settings, unlike families who reside in their own units, similar to apartments), we subsequently expanded our efforts to families with children facilities. Generally speaking, through the program we developed, we have aimed to offer on-site vaccinations at all shelters that serve adult individuals three times per week and all shelters that serve families two times per week.
  - **Through intensive on-site vaccination efforts and more, thousands of clients and staff have gotten and continue to get vaccinated:** Throughout the DSS system, including through our initial dedicated hub and our subsequent mobile vaccine efforts, nearly 11,000 DSS-DHS clients are now fully vaccinated with effective vaccines (primarily adults out of approximately 20,000 adults, including Single Adults and Adult Families without children clients). Furthermore, our City continues enhancing/intensifying efforts to provide all New Yorkers, including those experiencing homelessness, with numerous channels through which they can access the safe and free vaccine, such as efforts via contracted service providers who have medical clinic capacity or mobile van efforts via the City’s Health and Hospitals – this range of additional pathways/channels has helped go above and beyond what DSS-DHS has been able to administer specifically and are not reflected in these DSS-DHS vaccine program-specific totals.

##### Staff

- **COVID Vaccine Requirement:** In October 2021, Mayor de Blasio announced that effective October 29th, all City and contracted health and human services employees, including contracted staff working in DSS-DHS-HRA facilities, must show proof of vaccination to work, which superseded a previous directive that allowed unvaccinated staff to adhere to weekly COVID testing requirements.
  - Shelter providers have worked closely with their employees to get them vaccinated.
    - Providers are responsible for affirming their staff are vaccinated – and for determining how to take action against individuals who have not gotten vaccinated, including whether to place these individuals on unpaid leave.

#### 15. Are visitors permitted? If so, what protocols are followed?

To enhance security, the building will be designed to allow general entry through only one access point – the building’s front entrance. No one will be permitted onto the property unless the front entrance is opened via buzzer by security personnel. Security will be available around the clock, including at the front entrance, and will allow residents into the building.

Security staff at the main entrance are required to maintain a sign-in logbook for official visitors entering the facility. The only visitors permitted onto the premises will be: NYS OTDA staff, NYC DHS staff, EMS personnel, NYPD, clients’ legal counsel, building contractors, and service providers with whom we have established linkage agreements.

18. On what basis and with what processes was AACPI selected? Are there any writings reflecting applications, interviews, qualification assessments?

As indicated above, not-for-profit providers propose new shelters to DSS-DHS through our open-ended RFP process, which means proposals are accepted on a rolling basis. When a proposal is submitted, the quality of the proposal (including the need for the proposed shelter capacity at the location, the viability of the building, the scope of the client services, the experience of the provider, pricing and other operational matters) is evaluated and scored by agency program experts working with the Department of Social Services Contracts Office in accordance with New York City Procurement Policy Board Rules. The proposal is also reviewed by Agency leadership for consistency with the borough-based approach, and the capacity and equitable siting goals that the plan will achieve when it is fully implemented. For additional awareness/context, please find the open-ended RFP attached.

19. What processes or procedures were followed in vetting and/or examining and verifying AACPI's qualifications as a manager operator or responsible entity both as a financially responsible fiduciary and as an administrator? If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

As indicated above, when DSS-DHS receives a proposal for a new shelter facility, the quality of the proposal (including the need for the proposed shelter capacity at the location, the viability of the building, the scope of the client services, the experience of the provider, pricing and other operational matters) is evaluated and scored by agency program experts working with the Department of Social Services Contracts Office in accordance with New York City Procurement Policy Board Rules. The proposal is also reviewed by Agency leadership for consistency with the borough-based approach, and the capacity and equitable siting goals that the plan will achieve when it is fully implemented.

20. What specific planning considerations were involved and applied in the site selection in terms of the selection of this particular site and as contrasted with the selection of any other site and what other sites. If any, we're considered? If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

Please refer to the answers provided above. In addition, for all new shelter facilities, DSS-DHS follows the fair share requirement in the City Charter, which includes disclosure of facilities that are proximate to the shelter. The Fair Share requirement for this facility will be finalized in the comings months before the shelter opens.

21. What planning protocol exists/existed for the determination of the(a) population number, (b) makeup and gender at this site? If any writings exist reflecting same please advise and send us a copy.

Every single community in New York City has experienced and continues to experience homelessness, with community members falling on hard times and needing shelter and services to stabilize their lives in all community districts.

The Mayor's "Turning the Tide" plan commits to ensuring that, over time, shelters are distributed equitably to meet the need in all five boroughs, as we transform the shelter system and end haphazard band-aid practices, like the 21-year-old cluster program and use of commercial hotels which dates back to the 1960s, once and for all. To achieve this, we are phasing out the use of all cluster sites and commercial hotel facilities citywide, while siting a smaller number of high-quality borough-based shelters across the five boroughs, as our goal is to offer New Yorkers experiencing homelessness the opportunity to be sheltered in their home borough, closer to their support networks, including jobs, schools, healthcare, family, houses of worship, social services, and communities they called home in order to get back on their feet.

DSS-DHS also has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure there is appropriate systemwide capacity to meet our right to shelter obligations, and when siting and developing new shelter facilities, DSS-DHS must take into account the dynamic makeup of our client population. As has been widely reported, due to a range of factors, including a shift away from the mass incarceration approaches of the past at every

level of government, which is a positive progressive policy development, and deinstitutionalization over prior decades, we are continuing to see consistently increasing need for shelter among single adult individuals.

To that end, on-the-ground capacity and other systemwide needs are factored directly into the development and planning of this location, including as relates to population type and number of beds.

22. What protocols existed, and/or what screening mechanisms existed and were here applied in determining whether any of the prospective population had or might have abusive characteristics or records, mental health concerns, criminal records, communicable disease concerns and what protocols existed and will be applied to determine or verify such information. If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

The City of New York places all clients in appropriate locations in accordance with State Law – and we provide shelter to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness regardless of background. All verifiably homeless New Yorkers have a right to shelter regardless of background. This includes helping people rebuild their lives and grow through second chances as they get back on their feet. In addition to following State Law as relates to residency requirements and limitations, we also have to follow the law on providing shelter to all who are experiencing homelessness, regardless of background, since New York is under court order to provide shelter to all those who need it – and it would therefore be unlawful to discriminate against individuals based on their backgrounds or prior experiences

When a client experiencing homelessness comes to the Agency in need of services, staff conduct a thorough health and psychological assessment of each individual client to determine an appropriate shelter placement.

23. Were the City Planning Commission, Department of City Planning, the Bronx Borough Presidents office, the Finance Administration and or/or the Department of Investigation consulted in connection with any aspect of the foregoing reviews, inquiries or matters? If so, to what purpose and effect? If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

N/A

24. Were any recommendations, written or oral, received from any person or entity for the ultimate selectee, it's officers, agents or employees? If any writings exist reflecting same, please advise and send us a copy.

N/A

25. Commissioner Banks said on the Zoom call on Nov. 15 that a different configuration of the men's homeless shelter is possible, but that certain financial requirements must be met. Can you tell us what those financial requirements are, including capital investments and operational costs?

While the Commissioner indicated the different configurations can always be considered, cost-effectiveness is an important consideration. The site configuration and zoning at 6661 Broadway allows for the development of a 130-bed transitional housing facility, with space for programming, amenities, and other social services. The size limitations of the site do not allow for additional resources, such as permanent and/or affordable housing that we have added at other sites, for example. Even a dramatic decrease in the bed count at this proposed shelter location would yield too few permanent housing units to make such a project financially and operationally feasible. The development of affordable housing typically requires more land and resources than what is available at this location, and operationally, it is not possible to secure affordable housing financing for projects at such a modest scale of what could actually be developed at this site.

Regarding the specific configuration of the shelter, including bed counts and layouts, AAPCI will develop the design and configuration of the shelter, ensuring that the site meets the guidelines and requirements set forth by our contractual agreement with the not-for-profit organization.