

**Mayoral  
Response to  
Recommendations  
from the  
Commission  
on Community  
Reinvestment  
and the Closure of  
Rikers Island**



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# COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AND THE CLOSURE OF RIKERS ISLAND

*This response fulfills the Mayor's duty, as per Local Law 193, to respond to each of the recommendations published by the Commission.*

## **Introduction:**

New York City is entering a period of great optimism and opportunity. While the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet fully behind us, we are on the cusp of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make real change for all New Yorkers in every neighborhood on a grand scale. My Administration is focused on making New York City better for everyone and ensuring no person is left behind.

My Administration is working on keeping our neighborhoods affordable, improving our schools, increasing economic opportunity, making our streets safe and walkable, and restoring our city's vibrancy, especially in justice-involved and justice-impacted communities. We have expanded access to housing, mental health care, childcare, vocational training, apprenticeship programs, and improved collaboration between the city, state, and federal governments. The Mayor's Office remains focused on providing young people with upstream services and support and believes that, by increasing opportunities for all New Yorkers, with targeted programs in communities disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system, we can help make our communities safer, more vibrant, and reduce incarceration. We remain committed to building on our initial steps to help every community succeed. We have only just begun.

This response to the *Commission on Community Reinvestment and the Closure of Rikers Island Report* demonstrates our commitment to all New Yorkers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# EMPLOYMENT/ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation No. 1:** Removal of all legal barriers that will prohibit individuals with convictions from getting professional licenses and/or obtaining employment.

The City is dedicated to supporting individuals with convictions as they re-enter the workforce and is pursuing various avenues to minimize legal barriers that justice-involved individuals may face when getting professional licenses and employment. Initiatives include:

- DOC and IDNYC working to improve incarcerated people's access to identification by allowing formerly incarcerated individuals to use information related to their incarceration history towards the points needed to verify identity for an IDNYC. IDNYCs can be used to verify identity for employment and other licenses in NYC
- The Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity funded the John Jay College report "[Getting to Work with a Criminal Record: New York State License Guides](#)," in 2020, which provides detailed guidance for obtaining licenses in 25 high-demand occupations and professions for people who have a criminal conviction

In addition, the Administration supports the passage of the NYS Clean Slate Act, which would ensure that people's criminal convictions will be sealed after 3 years for misdemeanor convictions and 7 years for felony convictions.

**Recommendation No. 2:** Investing in multi-generational education/training centers and initiatives in the communities most impacted by incarceration; centers and initiatives must focus on stable career pathways.

The Administration has made significant investments in employment, job training, and education for New Yorkers of all ages and is committed to ensuring that the communities most impacted by incarceration have the skills and experience to pursue stable career pathways. The City has invested in several programs that specifically connect justice-involved New Yorkers to stable career pathways, including:

- Opening a record 100,000 summer employment seats in 2022 for young New Yorkers, with priority given to justice-involved students, through a \$79M investment in FY23
- Providing out-of-school, out-of-work, and justice-involved young adults with job training and work experience related to caretaking and maintaining green public spaces through the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
- Assisting nonprofit organizations with ways to pay wages or stipends to low-income 16-24 year-olds, including those with legal system involvement, who take part in internship opportunities through the Work Progress Program
- Supporting, through the Department of Probation, the Neighborhood Opportunity Network, a citywide network of community-based multi-service centers in the seven neighborhoods of NYC where large concentrations of people on probation reside. NeONs serve probation clients and community members, offering services such as adult education, employment preparation, mentoring, healthcare, literacy programs, as well as arts and sport programming
- Providing services through SBS' Bronx and Brooklyn Workforce Career Centers tailored to meet the training and employment needs of justice-involved individuals

In addition, the City has invested in workforce and education for all New Yorkers, focusing on those in underserved communities, by:

- Launching the City Agencies Revitalizing the Economy (CARE) strategy to catalyze investment and bring jobs and social services to underserved neighborhoods
- Launching the License to Careers program that provides drivers' education and preparation to enter the transportation sector for young adults who are out-of-school and out-of-work
- Launching Unity Works, a workforce and education program for runaway and homeless youth that targets recruitment for those that are LGBTQIA+
- Launching V-CRED, a vocational training and apprenticeship program for youth ages 16 to 24 in foster care

- Expanding the Work Learn Grow program that provides early college credit and paid work experiences to serve over 4,000 young adults in high-need schools
- Supporting Works Plus, a flexible, supportive service for referred participants of Cure Violence programs and other vulnerable youth by providing a range of work readiness opportunities, including work experience placements, hard/vocational and soft job skills development, and job search and career awareness/planning competencies
- Supporting the Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program, a year-round employment program that increases employment opportunities for participants and/or vulnerable youth who are at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence
- Supporting Jobs-Plus, a place-based employment program designed to increase the earnings and employment of working-age residents in designated public housing developments. The program provides employment services and financial counseling, financial incentives, and community support for work that organizes neighbors to promote the benefits of working and serve as a support network for overcoming barriers
- Expanding the Brooklyn STEAM Center, an innovative CTE school where students are trained in manufacturing, technology, sustainable, and creative fields
- Working with philanthropic partners to expand the College Bridge Program, a collaboration between CUNY and DOE to provide support to graduating seniors as they transition to college and career pathways at CUNY and beyond

**Recommendation No. 3:** Invest in entrepreneurship programs and small businesses, including nontraditional industries.

Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs is a multi-agency effort critical to the diversification and growth of the New York City workforce and larger economy. The Department of Small Business Services, NYC Economic Development Corporation, the Mayor’s Office of Minority and Women-Owned Businesses (M/WBEs) support entrepreneurship and small businesses by:

- Helping minority and women-owned businesses get City-certified and compete for contracts

- Connecting entrepreneurs to free resources ranging from business courses to legal services
- Explaining government rules and regulations, helping businesses avoid or fix violations and penalties
- Matching businesses with financial assistance, including expanding access to capital and low-interest loans from the City
- Identifying mentorship opportunities for entrepreneurs, including through targeted programming supporting women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of color
- Conducting marketing campaigns to support shopping small and local

The Adams Administration is also making additional investments and reforms to help small businesses and entrepreneurs thrive. As a part of the City's economic recovery efforts, the Administration has:

- Launched the \$75M Small Business Opportunity Fund to support BIPOC and immigrant entrepreneurs
- Supported non-traditional industries, such as the cannabis industry, to encourage justice-impacted communities to create their own businesses & ensure that NYC's cannabis industry is the most equitable in the country
- Provided direct case management support to 10,000 small businesses through the Small Business Resource Network
- Reformed 118 City regulations as part of Executive Order 2, Small Business Forward, saving small businesses approximately \$8.9 million
- Secured the passage of State legislation to increase the discretionary cap for M/WBEs to \$1 million, increasing City procurement opportunities and new revenue streams for small M/WBEs
- Created new programs to support street vending business

**Recommendation No. 4:** Ensure people who are detained/incarcerated have access to fair labor wages and benefits.

The administration is committed to the ethical treatment of incarcerated persons, including the provision of fair labor wages. In 2007, the highest skilled individuals in

custody department wide at Rikers were being paid \$0.28-\$0.39 per hour. Individuals working in the Support Service Division, which included those who worked on Hart Island, were paid \$0.50 per hour. The lowest paid individuals earned \$0.17 per hour. Individuals who enrolled in educational classes through the Island Academy, the Horizon Academy, or through vocational education (computer skills, custodial maintenance, automotive or pest control) were entitled to \$0.30 per day.

In 2020, the Department of Correction launched a wage taskforce that standardized job descriptions and paid rates commensurate with the level of skill of each person in custody. This taskforce created a three-tiered system of payment. The most challenging jobs (and those for which is most difficult to recruit, such as Special Sanitation Assistant and Suicide Prevention Aid) are paid \$1.45 per hour. “Middle tier,” as the next level job is referred to, pays \$1 per hour, while the lowest tier jobs pay \$0.55 per hour.

By contrast, in California, individuals deemed to have the highest skills who are employed full-time are paid \$0.30-\$0.34 per hour; hourly rates for this level range from \$0.32-\$0.37 for those employed part-time. Work that requires lower skills are paid between \$0.07 and \$0.30 respectively.

New York City continues to examine forward-looking policies and practices that compensate incarcerated persons fairly, and that may provide better opportunities for detained persons in and out of custody.

**Recommendation No. 5:** Invest much more significantly in vocational and hard-skills training, and GED and college programs, for individuals who are detained/incarcerated.)

The City is committed to ensuring we set individuals experiencing incarceration up for successful reentry into the workforce once they are released. The City has several initiatives towards this aim:

- DOE offers adult education on Rikers, partnering with DOC to expand access to education and credentials by launching computer-based GED testing
- DOE also offers job training to people experiencing incarceration on Rikers, including building maintenance and carpentry, tech, and culinary arts, and combines these trainings with academic classes that prepare students to earn a High School Diploma or Equivalency

- DOE and DOC have formed a joint work group to address education on Rikers, including expanding internet access and increasing the number and types of job training options available
- MOCJ's Community Justice Reentry Network is a citywide reentry initiative that supports a network of high-quality non-profits focused on providing paid transitional employment, job training, access to higher education, and supportive services to justice system-involved individuals
- Through High School Equivalency Connect (HSE), CUNY and SUNY connect individuals who have been involved in the criminal legal system to support adult basic education, High school equivalency test preparation, workforce development programming, as well as offer case management and stabilization support services

## Health focused recommendations

### **Recommendation No. 1: Strategically reinvest city, state, federal dollars.**

The City is committed to strategically using funding at all levels of government (City, State and Federal) to provide better, more equitable access to care for all New Yorkers, especially those in underserved communities as well as those most impacted by the incarceration.

The City has taken the following steps to engage the State to better serve the communities most impacted by incarceration:

- Engaging the New York State Department of Health (SDOH) around its pending 1115 Medicaid waiver amendment proposal to the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS)
  - Submitting a public comment calling for expanding how these Medicaid funds can be used to address social determinants of health and to expand access to mental health care. The City is in direct communication with the SDOH on this work
- Health + Hospitals (H+H) is working with the SDOH to advance a new Medicaid Managed Care program to serve patients experiencing homelessness and transitioning out of the criminal legal system. This “Special Populations” Medicaid Managed care proposal currently under consideration at CMS will allow H+H, NYC, and key partners to scale up

the care models H+H has built and to make substantial investments in comprehensive care management to connect hard to reach populations to care and support their overall health. In addition, the Special Populations proposal would allow H+H and partners to invest in new models of care for patients too unstable for the traditional shelter system. When implemented, the “Special Populations” program will be a major step towards putting the social factors that influence patient’s health at the forefront of their care.

In addition, the City is also working to ensure that funds received through the Opioid Settlements are equitably distributed across the city and reaching populations most impacted by the opioid epidemic, including those involved in the criminal justice system, and with a focus on harm reduction.

**Recommendation No. 2:** Enhance the existing network of health care and facilitative services to connect and keep connected to health care, marginalized residents in disproportionately burdened neighborhoods of the city to prevent avoidable involvement with the criminal-legal, shelter and emergency systems. We recommend a requirement for community systems to be more responsive to patient needs and focused on health outcomes.

The Administration is committed to ensuring all New Yorkers, especially those at risk of justice system involvement, have access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate healthcare.

To better serve all of NYC’s diverse communities, the City and the public hospital system are committed to increasing diversity as well as the use of peers among its workforce, including clinical practitioners. The City is supportive of expanding federal eligibility for national health service and other loan forgiveness programs in order to recruit more diverse practitioners. In addition, DOHMH provides training on harm reduction principles and strategies to DOHMH staff, other city agencies, mobile crisis teams, and non-profit staff. DOHMH provides [Criminal Justice Toolkits](#) for providers working with CLS-involved individuals as well as [virtual naloxone trainings](#) several times a month. DCAS provides several [Equity & Inclusion Courses](#) that include unconscious bias training and an understanding of NYC’s Human Rights Laws. Finally, the NYC Board of Health released the [following statement](#) on racism as a public health crisis.

**Recommendation No. 3:** Invest in youth-focused prevention and alternatives to incarceration and detention.

The City has made unprecedented investments in youth services to engage youth and prevent justice-involvement:

- Invested \$79M to fund [100,000 summer youth employment opportunities](#) for youth ages 14-24, and prioritizing high-poverty youth and those who are system involved
  - Providing MetroCards for SYEP participants, providing them with a way to get to work and avoid having to jump the turnstile
- Expanding the Saturday Night Lights program, a youth development initiative that provides free sports programs for over 3,000 young people every Saturday night at 106 gyms across the city
- Expanded the Summer Rising program — New York City’s largest summer program ever — to 110,000 elementary and middle school students to provide fun, full-day, culturally relevant, hands-on learning. Programs are in low-income communities and prioritize students in temporary housing, those with disabilities and those needing additional academic supports
- Implementing the [Blueprint to End Gun Violence](#) that refocuses the NYPD on the individuals responsible for the majority of shootings in the city and the sources of guns in the five boroughs, empowers violence interrupters, provides jobs and enrichment programming for at-risk youth, expands mental health care, and improves collaboration between the city, state, and federal government
- Implemented a new Citywide Crime and Quality of Life Enforcement Initiative focused on the 17 precincts that account for almost half of the city’s shootings. Under the initiative, Neighborhood Safety Teams will work seamlessly with neighborhood and youth coordination officers, as well as with the field intelligence officers who focus on identifying the locations and individual drivers of violent crime in each command
- Expanded funding and eligibility for the Fair Futures program, which provides coaching and tutoring for youth in foster care and will soon cover youth in/leaving the justice system as well
- Expanding the Work Learn Grow program that provides early college credit and paid work experiences to serve over 4,000 young adults in high need schools

- Supporting Works Plus program, a flexible, supportive service for referred participants of Cure Violence programs and other vulnerable youth in the community by providing a range of work readiness opportunities
- Supporting the Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program, a year-round employment program that increases employment opportunities for participants and/or vulnerable youth in the community who are at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. In this program, young people work at local community-based organizations, engaged in positive activities while developing the skills and acumen that will contribute to their social and professional growth
- The Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV) works to coordinate the city's various anti-gun violence initiatives, amplify community-based intervention and prevention services, and introduce technological solutions to prevent gun violence to create safe, empowered and interconnected communities in New York City. OPGV sponsors 25 students each summer to learn restorative justice practices and interactive learning to become credible messengers. In addition, OPGV sits on the Advisory Board of the Institute for Transformative Mentoring (ITM) at the New School
- Supporting the Precision Employment Opportunities Program, a joint effort designed to incapacitate the network of individuals involved in gun violence without the use of law enforcement and incarceration. These employment opportunities are meant to engage high risk individuals from targeted areas leading the city in gun violence during the times when those incidents are most likely to occur. Participants are identified by ONS and agency partners and provided paid training, job placements as well as employment and social service supports, and training in restorative justice and healing circles
- Piloting the Advance Peace (Hybrid Model) program, which seeks to identify "high risk" individuals with a history of involvement in gun violence and provide them with intensive mentorship and support. Mentors are responsible for providing transformational opportunities by offering each participant a personalized fellowship to help guide them towards sustainable growth, mental and emotional healing, and healthy behaviors. Fellows can earn monetary incentives for the successful completion of specified goals and no involvement in gun violence

**Recommendation No. 4:** Invest in Street Outreach, Service Referral, and Crisis De-escalation by engaging with persons that are experiencing street homelessness and connecting them to services that minimize interactions and touchpoints with the CLS, ultimately preventing (re-) incarceration.)

The Adams Administration has prioritized addressing street homelessness and connecting this population with services. Investments and commitments include:

- Investing \$170 Million in the FY23 Executive Budget to provide high-quality services and resources for unsheltered New Yorkers. The funding is the largest investment made by any administration in street outreach and low-barrier programs. The investment will fund 1,400 low barrier safe haven and stabilization beds, bringing the total to over 4,000 beds to serve New Yorkers
- Launching the nine-point [Subway Safety Plan](#) that expands response teams and mental health services and adds trained clinicians to connect people who need help with resources
- In addition, DHS has outreach teams working 24/7, 365 days a year, offering a range of services including shelter and referrals to other services.
- Making an unprecedented \$55M investment in the expansion of the B-HEARD in April 2022. Expanding B-HEARD - the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division - is part of the New York City's commitment to treat mental health crises as public health problems - not public safety issues. For the first time in New York City's history, teams of health professionals - including EMTs/paramedics and mental health professionals - are responding to 911 mental health calls in areas of Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. Over the coming months, B-HEARD will expand to several high-needs neighborhoods in Central Brooklyn and in Eastern Queens, and more neighborhoods in the South Bronx
- Piloting the Street Homeless Advocacy Project (SHAP), a volunteer outreach initiative to provide direct support to those experiencing homelessness. Led by Norman Siegel and Robert Hayes in conjunction with the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing and the Doe Fund, the new initiative will help train New Yorkers to become volunteer advocates for those experiencing homelessness

- Launching the Homeless Assistance Fund with the Partnership for New York City. The fund is a collective public-private initiative to provide services and mental health resources to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Assistance Fund partners with Breaking Ground to accelerate getting unsheltered New Yorkers and individuals living with mental illness into the treatment programs and housing they need. This program layers and strengthens the city’s existing homeless outreach initiatives

**Recommendation No. 5: Invest in community health and wellness, social support and community systems.**

The City is committed to ensuring that people involved or at risk of involvement with CLS have the resources they need to thrive. Examples include:

- Building on the already-successful work of CMS violence interrupters and ensuring they have the resources needed to do their work. MOCJ’s workforce initiatives, including Community Justice Reentry Network and Precision Employment Initiatives, employ CLS-involved individuals
- Pioneering two Support and Connection Centers to give first responders an alternative to avoidable emergency room visits or criminal justice interventions. The East Harlem Support and Connection Center, which opened in February 2020, offers short-term clinical and non-clinical services to people with mental health and substance use needs, and promotes community-based and person-centered engagement, stabilization and connection to services. Guests (defined as people who were referred to, eligible for, and chose to receive services at a Center) are offered mental health, medical, substance use and peer support services as well as help with basic needs and discharge planning
- In FY23, making an unprecedented multi-year investment in a comprehensive benefits system that addresses the housing, food, health and cash assistance needs of eligible New Yorkers and allows residents to access benefits more effectively, efficiently – and with dignity and respect. A large CBO re-grant program, City agency coordination, a one-stop-shop portal, and a centralized benefits navigation team will be kicked off in fall 2022 to connect New Yorkers to benefits, and increase the amount of money going into households that need it the most to make communities stronger and more resilient

## **Recommendation No. 6:** Invest in community training and messaging.

The Administration is committed to ensuring all New Yorkers have access to high-quality, affordable, culturally appropriate healthcare that meets New Yorkers where they are, especially those at risk of CLS involvement. The City offers several trainings to help providers better serve their communities:

- DOHMH provides trainings on harm reduction principles and strategies to DOHMH staff, other city agencies, mobile crisis teams, and non-profit staff.
- DOHMH also provides [Criminal Justice Toolkits](#) for providers working with CLS involved individuals as well as [virtual naloxone trainings](#) several times a month.
- DCAS provides several [Equity & Inclusion Courses](#) that includes unconscious bias trainings and an understanding of NYC's Human Right's Laws.

Mayor Adams created a new Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships (OFBCP). OFBCP serves as a conduit between city government, the faith-based community throughout New York City, and nonprofit organizations. OFCP seeks to improve the welfare of all New Yorkers and is housed within the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU). The City is committed to using faith leaders as partners in reaching vulnerable communities.

## **Housing/Homelessness Focused Recommendations**

**Recommendation No. 1:** The combination of federal, state and city rental assistance programs should be sufficiently funded to meet the need to cover all those experiencing homelessness in the City regardless of what system they are in and to prevent homelessness.

The City is laser-focused on using every tool at its disposal to help vulnerable and housing insecure New Yorkers achieve long-term stability. As part of this commitment, this Administration is making dedicated investments and finding innovative ways to strengthen and expand access to rental assistance programs and housing opportunities. Many of these commitments are outlined in ["Housing Our Neighbors," the Mayor's blueprint for housing and homelessness](#). Some commitments include:

- Investing a record \$22B in HPD and NYCHA over the next ten years to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income and formerly homeless New Yorkers

- Tracking and counting New Yorkers in all five shelter systems, for the first time ever, instead of measuring homelessness based on the DHS shelter census alone. This will hold us accountable for addressing the full scope of the crisis and increase transparency for the public
- Pursuing policy and process reforms to ensure all homeless New Yorkers have access to the full range of options for housing and support, regardless of their reason for being in shelter or which shelter system they are in
- Continuing to invest in CityFHEPS, the City’s own rental assistance program, advocate for the reallocation of unused Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funds from other states to New York, and advance strategies to make it easier and more efficient for providers and staff to process rental subsidy applications
- Launching a coordinated, interagency enforcement and outreach effort to combat source-of-income discrimination, including through partnerships with professional organizations to increase capacity for fair housing testing. Continuing to invest in emergency financial assistance, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment programs, and other tools to combat housing instability and help more New Yorkers stay housed
- Allocating new resources to the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit’s (PEU) Tenant Helpline & launching a public education campaign to help New Yorkers navigate their rights as tenants, including rental assistance and New York City’s Right-to-Counsel law
- Expanding a pilot to provide emergency grants to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence to help them avoid shelter entry
- Increasing agency capacity to identify and enforce against landlords who commit harassment
- Strengthening community-based networks to provide tenants at risk of harassment with counseling and support

**Recommendation No. 2a:** Increase funding and add to the supply of supportive housing instead of reallocating the existing 15,000 units

This City is committed to providing housing to support the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including those involved with the justice system. Actions include:

- As part of the FY23 Executive Budget, the Administration is investing \$5.8 million for additional staff to expedite client placements into supportive housing units
- Focusing City funding to accelerate supportive housing development and achieve the City’s commitment to build 15,000 supportive homes by 2028, two years earlier than initially promised
- Encouraging the creation of supportive housing through recently passed legislation to convert hotels into affordable housing
- Supporting legislation to achieve stronger anti-discrimination protections in the housing market for New Yorkers with criminal justice histories and working with New York State to increase access to housing for people exiting correctional facilities

Recognizing the need for greater access to supportive housing, the City is also committed to improving and speeding up the process of applying for and moving into supportive housing. The City will undertake evaluations of these processes to identify and pursue various reforms that can expand access to supportive housing, help fill vacant supportive units faster, and reduce administrative burden for residents. The Administration has already identified and committed to implementing process improvements including:

- Expanding supportive housing eligibility to families so that they can become eligible based on the healthcare and service needs of children or other non-head-of-household members
- Eliminating the requirement for clinical evaluations in cases where other information is available to assess supportive housing eligibility

**Recommendation No. 2b:** There is a need for increased access to housing opportunities for foster youth and seniors.

ACS is committed to helping youth safely and successfully transition out of foster care and has a dedicated unit focused on outreach and support for foster care with housing needs. Programs that specifically support foster youth include:

- ACS’ “Supervision to 21” unit that follows and assists youth until their 21st birthday

- Young people in ACS care who reach their 21st birthday are able to stay in ACS-funded residential or family foster care until they secure stable housing. They also receive housing support services and maintain eligibility for all housing subsidies necessary to achieve independent housing stability
- ACS has a team of Youth Coordinators who check in with the youth six times in the first six (6) months after they leave foster care. They provide referrals to educational sites, mental health services, programs through HRA, assistance in obtaining vital records, and help young people obtain housing, such as supportive housing, NYCHA, Section 8, EHVs, and CityFHEPS
- The City will fund ACS housing navigation and housing stability services to enable youth aging out of foster care to successfully secure and maintain affordable safe housing using vouchers such as, but not limited to, CityFHEPS
- The City will fund housing navigation and housing stability services for ACS involved families to create permanency, stable homes for youth and their families in order to mitigate the long-term risk of homelessness for all young people with history in ACS systems

The City will also leverage several different resources to both create affordable housing for seniors and help seniors stay in their homes:

- Increasing enrollment in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), which are programs that freeze the rents of seniors and people with disabilities living in rent-regulated apartments
- Targeting federally-assisted properties that serve the city's seniors and very low-income New Yorkers for support, to help owners address renovations and preserve housing quality, affordability, and stability for tenants
- Launching HomeFix 2.0 to help low- and moderate-income homeowners in small, one- to four-unit properties fund home repairs, including accessibility improvements that can help seniors age in place
- Create a citywide Homeowner Help Desk to provide an estimated 1,000 homeowners each year with housing, financial, and legal counseling on issues including scam prevention, mortgage and municipal payment assistance, repair financing, and estate planning, as well as other forms of support to increase stability and prevent displacement

**Recommendation No. 3:** JISH service funding is too low and takes too long to receive.

The City is committed to assessing the funding for supportive housing programs and ensuring they have proper resources to function.

**Recommendation No. 4:** Increase efforts to support Moving On initiatives.

The City is committed to helping all New Yorkers in transitional, supportive, and other temporary housing transition to permanent, stable housing. As part of these efforts, the City provides access to vouchers and housing search support to New Yorkers transitioning from supportive to permanent housing through the Moving On program. The program has helped hundreds of residents move out of supportive housing since 2015, providing tenants with the tools they need to make the transition and freeing up supportive units for New Yorkers who are currently in shelter and in need of housing. This administration will continue to invest in this critical program in the coming years and expects to release an RFP for the next iteration in spring 2023.

**Recommendation No. 5:** Increase the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) Services & Operating Funding. High property costs in New York City and metropolitan areas are straining providers' service budgets.

ESSHI is a State-funded and operated program. The City encourages the State to consider increasing these rates.

## Youth Focused Recommendations

**Recommendation No. 1:** Invest in Healthy Start initiatives

The City provides several programs that support families and invest in healthy starts for families. DOHMH focuses on the needs of new families starting in pregnancy and continuing through the first year of life -- and there are multiple programs and supports for new families that help improve family outcomes. These initiatives prioritize families at risk of suffering due to discrimination including the unhoused, victims of domestic violence, residents of NYCHA, families involved with ACS, and those who live in historically disinvested neighborhoods or neighborhoods with the highest rates of infant death and severe maternal morbidity. Initiatives include:

- NYC's New Family Home Visits Program (NFHVT) is focused on TRIE neighborhoods. This program connects some of the most vulnerable first-

time families to much-needed home-visiting services and support, while promoting healthy childhood development and improving the well-being of young babies. ACS and DOHMH work collaboratively to help refer parents to the program

- Newborn Home Visiting Program (NBHV) operates under the umbrella of NFHV to provide post-discharge support to families with an infant 0-3 months old
- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based, community health program that connects first-time moms with nurses and shows significant improvements in the health and lives of moms -- and their children -- living in poverty
- The Citywide Doula Initiative (CDI) aims to reduce inequities in birth outcomes in NYC by developing and providing doula services to those living in TRIE neighborhoods
- NYC Breastfeeding Hospital Collaborative is a program that seeks to increase the percentage of NYC resident births that occur in “Baby-Friendly” designated facilities. As of January 2022, there are a total of 24 Baby-Friendly designated facilities in NYC, which deliver an estimated 51% of NYC resident births each year
- Family Wellness Suites are safe, welcoming, and supportive spaces for every family member to receive services, health education, and linkages to community resources in the Health Department’s Action Centers located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and East Harlem
- In addition, when developmental delays or emotional or learning difficulties are suspected, the City provides referral to quality developmental interventions through Early Intervention programming for babies 0-3 throughout NYC. This program serves 30,000 children /year.
- Childcare is essential for families, and the City has many continuing and new initiatives and policy changes to make childcare assistance across the city more equitable, accessible, and affordable for families

[The Blueprint for Child Care & Early Childhood Education](#) lays out the City’s plans to expand equitable access to affordable, high-quality childcare. The Blueprint includes common-sense initiatives for a quality system that supports families and childcare

providers. This Blueprint is just the beginning of the administration’s work to make child care high-quality, affordable, and accessible. It sets goals to:

- **Increase access** to childcare assistance for more than 41,000 children across New York City, including children in high need neighborhoods, children living in temporary housing, and children whose immigration status precludes them from receiving state and federally funded care
- **Make care more affordable** by reducing the amount families receiving subsidized care contribute toward their childcare
- **Increase capacity** by creating more childcare and early education seats by leveraging tax abatements and credits to facilitate additional capacity
- **Improve the process for** families by creating a single online childcare application portal to make applying for childcare easier for families
- **Enhance supports for** the childcare workforce to reduce administrative burden, create more financial stability, and achieve higher quality care
- **Grow a highly qualified** childcare workforce by widening access to provider career advancement and expanding opportunities for early childhood professionals to earn higher education credentials in partnership with CUNY’s New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute

**Recommendation No. 2:** Equitable investment in systems (education, health and employment)

The Adams administration has announced the following programs for young people:

- Funded a record [100,000 summer youth employment opportunities](#). DYCD is dedicating 1,000 slots and contracting directly with District 75 to serve its students in a more intentional way, 2,000 slots to CUNY to serve students with no prior internship experience, and 20,000 slots at high need schools. The City is also prioritizing young adults who reside in NYCHA for community-based SYEP slots
- Expanded the [Summer Rising program — New York City’s largest summer program ever](#) — to 110,000 elementary and middle school students to provide fun, full-day, culturally-relevant, hands-on learning
- Expanded funding for the Fair Futures program, which provides coaching and tutoring for youth in foster care

- Expanding the Work Learn Grow program that provides early college credit and paid work experiences to serve over 4,000 young adults in high need schools
- Launching FutureReadyNYC, an initiative that will provide career-connected learning in 50 high need schools, through the DOE
- Committed to [connecting every young person on probation aged 21 and under with a credible messenger mentor](#) — someone with experience in the justice system who is committed to preventing others from following in their footsteps
- Announced [nine new Family Enrichment Centers](#), where families and children can connect with neighbors, volunteer their time, and access resources and supports
- Announced a [new vocational training and apprenticeship program](#) that will provide training for professional certification, paid internships, career mentoring, and employment opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care

There are several programs that provide health and education-related support to young people:

- School-based Health Centers run by DOHMH provide medical services, mental health counseling and health education as it relates to medical and reproductive issues
- New York City Teens Connection provides at risk youth with evidence-based sex education programming and formal linkage to quality, teen-friendly clinics
- School Mental Health Program provides mental health resource coordination and connects schools to access to providers onsite. The program includes targeted level clinical services to address diagnosed mental health concerns, but also provides preventive level services through selective and universal level of services
- Office of School Health Nursing Program employs over 2,000 nurses to serve DOE schools (including District 75), charter schools and non-public schools. It also provides full-time nurses to almost 400 severely disabled students. School nurses provide medication administration, case management for chronic diseases, health education, screening, assessments and referrals

for clinical and mental health issues, urgent care and nursing procedural services to students

- Office of School Health School physicians provides medical supports physical examinations, chronic disease management, medication orders for select in school medications
- DYCD operates Beacon Community Centers, which are comprehensive community centers located in DOE schools, serving people of all ages. There are 91 Beacon Community Centers operating citywide with 1,200 participants per center. For all participants, especially youth, Beacon Community Centers offer a safe place to engage in recreational activities, discover new interests, acquire skills, and find opportunities to contribute to the community, guided and supported by program staff

**Recommendation No. 3:** Invest in two-generational models to support young people and their families.

The Administration knows that children and families thrive when they have the supports and resources they need. ACS plays a role in providing these supports to families, along with many other city and state agencies and nonprofit providers, through:

- A focus on leveraging concrete resources, stakeholder relationships, and community and family strengths to drive toward greater equity and social justice, reduce disparities and disproportionality – including in the child welfare system – and create conditions that enhance well-being for families, children and communities
- At the end of 2021, ACS announced a plan to expand from 3 Family Enrichment Centers (FECs) to 30 FECs over the next three years and released an RFP for the first 9 additional Centers. The FECs aim to leverage family and community strengths to bolster social connectedness and access to supports, which all families need to thrive and build resilience
- In addition, ACS funds 11 Community Partnerships that serve as organizing and planning networks that support children, youth, and their families using two-generation/whole family strategies:
  - Examples include community resource events that provide concrete support to families such as direct, emergency cash support; clothing; shoes, educational and recreational information and items for children and youth;

household items that the entire family can utilize; college scholarships; and access to a range of other resources through the Partnerships' network of roughly 40-50 providers apiece

**Recommendation No. 4: Scale and correctly resource Next STEPS Transformative Mentoring Program.**

Next STEPS (Striving Toward Engagement and Peaceful Solutions) is a credible messenger led, place-based transformative mentoring program helping at-risk 16–24-year-old young adults residing in NYCHA housing transform attitudes and behaviors that may lead to violence or criminal activity. The Administration has already added an additional program site and is exploring additional expansion, including the possibility of serving younger aged youth.

- The Adams administration has also expanded several programs that support and mentor young adults who are justice or violence involved:
  - Committed to [connect every young person on probation aged 21 and under with a credible messenger mentor](#) — someone with experience in the justice system who is committed to preventing others from following in their footsteps
  - Expanding Fair Futures – a program currently serving foster youth ages 11-21 who receive support from coaches, tutors and specialists – to youth in the juvenile justice continuum and to young people up to the age of 26
  - Cure Violence credible messenger mentors connect with young people in the juvenile detention system
  - ACS is also working to scale internship, vocational training, and employment initiatives for older youth in -- or exiting -- foster care, juvenile justice detention, or placement. This will include new services to introduce youth to career exploration, vocational education and training, school (including higher education), labor market readiness, and life skills
  - Supporting, through the Department of Probation, the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) -- a citywide network of community-based multi-service centers in the seven neighborhoods of NYC where large concentrations of people on probation reside. NeONs each serve people

on probation and community members, offering services such as adult education, employment preparation, mentoring, healthcare, literacy programs, as well as arts and sports programming

- Providing out-of-school, out-of-work and justice-involved young adults with job training and work experience related to caretaking and maintaining green public spaces through the NYC

### **Recommendation No. 5: Wraparound Service-Delivery Models.**

The City has several wrap-around service delivery models already in place:

- NeON (Neighborhood Opportunity Network) includes a Workforce Development initiative for young adults that are/are not under community supervision. The program provides jobs, educational degrees, certifications, and vocational training through supported connection. The program operates community-based centers in 7 neighborhoods with a large concentration of people on probation
- CUNY Fatherhood Academy provides Education, work readiness and parenting program for young adult fathers (YMI)
- Fair Futures, an initiative that provides life coaches and tutoring for youth in foster care
- New York City Young Men’s Initiative (YMI) is the nation’s most comprehensive municipal strategy tackling the disparities faced by young men of color. The Young Men’s Initiative has aligned itself with the White House’s “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative.
- In addition, the Department of Youth and Community Development have several programs that provide robust wraparound education and job training service models including:
  - Learn and Earn, a program for low-income DOE students that provides tutoring, counseling, paid work experience, workforce training, career exploration, graduation support, and postsecondary access.
  - Train and Earn, Advance and Earn, and Unity Works are programs for out-school-out-of-work young adults with GED prep, workforce credentials,

career exploration, paid work experience and placement into a job, postsecondary or advanced training.

### **Recommendation No. 6: Quality Spaces for Young People.**

The City recognizes the importance of quality spaces for communities to engage in prosocial programming and activities, and has significant resources already in place to promote such programs and activities:

- 36 Recreation Centers that serve on average 3M visitors a year and 142K members including ~80K youth (2019) and offer after school and summer camp opportunities for youth
  - Parks is building 5 new recreational centers with the NYC Department of Design and Construction that will serve Tremont and Soundview in the BX, Flatbush in Brooklyn, the North Shore in SI, and Jamaica in Queens
- 99 Cornerstone Centers, which are operated by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and provide engaging, high-quality youth services in partnership with NYCHA and our strong network of nonprofit providers across the City
- 8 drop-in centers for youth experiencing homelessness under the age of 25. Five of these sites operate 24/7, one located in each borough
- At the end of 2021, ACS announced a plan to expand from 3 Family Enrichment Centers (FECs) to 30 FECs over the next three years and released an RFP for the first 9 additional Centers. The FECs aim to leverage family and community strengths to bolster social connectedness and access to supports, which all families need to thrive and build resilience

### **Recommendation No. 7: The City should invest in community-based navigation initiatives, hiring navigators from the communities they serve, to help make social services more navigable.**

The City has several community-based programs to connect people to resource navigators, including:

- Community Crisis Response Initiative, which provides grants to 27 local CBOs for mentoring, arts and culture, youth empowerment and experiential learning opportunities to young people throughout the City. This program focuses on the Young Men's Initiative 6 priority neighborhoods: Brownsville,

E. Harlem, East New York, North Shore Staten Island, South Bronx and Southeast Queens

- In order to specifically address the distinct needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, the City is funding a new Navigator program that will provide 16 young adults with lived experience of homelessness full-time work across the eight Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) drop-in centers administered by DYCD. Other commitments to this population can be found in the recently released plan, [Opportunity Starts with a Home](#).

In addition, The New York City Department of Education views Community Schools as a central strategy for achieving an equitable educational system. The Community Schools initiative builds off the Department of Education's (DOE's) Framework for Great Schools and is aligned with the administration's efforts focused on youth and families, including expanding full-day pre-kindergarten to every four-year old, offering afterschool programs to every middle school student, and improving school climate. Community Schools create welcoming, supportive environments that offer an integrated focus on academics, health and mental health services, youth development, expanded learning opportunities and family and community engagement supports to ensure students are ready and able to learn. With equity as a key driver, the DOE is developing the next generation of Community Schools and creating the systems and structures to ensure that these schools address inequality in sustainable ways, are inclusive, accessible, and prepare students to be college and career ready.

**Recommendation No. 8:** Intervening at the earliest point when a young person is in contact with the justice system.

New York City should be a place where children and families are supported, where young people get the opportunity they need, and never encounter the justice system.

The first step is prevention. MOCJ currently operates the City's Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs for juveniles. In 2024, ATD programs will transition to ACS. These programs, based on models in jurisdictions across the country, are designed to reduce unnecessary reliance on secure detention by monitoring youth with varying levels of intensity in the community during the pendency of their case; and to ultimately ensure their return to court without a re-arrest. Under ACS, these programs will serve up to 385 youth per year, have a greater presence directly in family court, develop individualized supervision plans tailored to youth's needs intended

to avoid re-arrest, employ credible messengers and provide a range of programs as alternatives to detention.

ATDs effectively place a filter at the front door of juvenile detention facilities to identify and divert those youth who do not require a secure level of custody to ensure they return to court without a re-arrest. The ATD programs in NYC have produced collective success rates of approximately 80%; however, they have been consistently underutilized. Citywide, these ATDs operated at 21% of capacity in 2019, ranging from a high of 43% to a low of just 3%. Under ACS, these programs will serve up to 310 youth per year, have a greater presence directly in family court, develop individualized supervision plans tailored to youth's needs intended to avoid re-arrest, employ credible messengers, offer incentives for successful participation and provide a range of programs as alternatives to detention. There are also Cure Violence Credible Messengers (a.k.a violence interrupters/ mentors) in the juvenile detention system.

ACS is also working to scale paid internships, vocational training, career mentoring, and employment initiatives for older youth in or exiting foster care or juvenile justice detention or placement. This will include new services to introduce youth to career exploration, vocational education and training, school (including higher education), labor market readiness, and life skills.

Furthermore, MOCJ has a new High Risk youth program that is designed to focus on the engagement of older youth at high risk for deeper justice involvement and with a history of program failure.

When young people do enter the juvenile justice system, we have supports in place to support them in the justice system, and connect them to back to school or the workforce:

- The Adams administration has expanded Fair Futures – a program currently serving foster youth ages 11-21 who receive support from coaches, tutors and specialists – to youth in the juvenile justice continuum and to young people up to the age of 26.
- Cure Violence Credible Messenger mentors connect with young people in the juvenile detention system.
- ACS is also working to scale internship, vocational training, and employment initiatives for older youth in or exiting foster care or juvenile justice detention or placement. This will include new services to introduce youth to career

exploration, vocational education and training, school (including higher education), labor market readiness, and life skills.

- Providing out-of-school, out-of-work and justice-involved young adults with job training and work experience related to caretaking and maintaining green public spaces through the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
- Assisting nonprofit organizations to pay wages or stipends to low-income young adults taking part internship opportunities, serving opportunity youth ages 16-24, including those with legal system involvement, through the Work Progress Program
- Supporting, through the Department of Probation, the Neighborhood Opportunity Network, a citywide network of community-based multi-service centers in the seven neighborhoods of NYC where large concentrations of people on probation reside. NeONs each serve probation clients and community members, offering services such as adult education, employment preparation, mentoring, healthcare, literacy programs, and arts and sport programming