



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 20, 2018

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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION CELEBRATES CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH BY
HIGHLIGHTING THE CITY'S BROADENING ARRAY OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

The NYC Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) Collected More Than \$3 Billion in the Last Four Years, While Also Connecting Parents to Employment and Reducing More than \$100 Million in Child Support Debt Owed by Low-Income New Yorkers

In recognition of August as Child Support Awareness Month, the Department of Social Services (DSS)/Human Resources Administration's (HRA's) Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) is raising awareness about the services it provides and celebrating the parents of New York City through the release of a series of videos on mothers and fathers who have received assistance from the office.

"The Child Support program is another one of the City's vital services to help lift New Yorkers out of poverty, helping thousands of families make ends meet," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. "During Child Support Awareness Month we celebrate both the program and the parents whose dedication to their children makes it such a success."

Titled "Parents of OCSS," the video series features more than a dozen parents from across the city discussing what it means to be a parent—sharing their hopes for their children's future, the struggles they have faced, and, in some cases, how the Child Support program assisted them in their success.

"We know parents want to support their children," said **HRA Administrator Grace Bonilla**. "Child Support's new 'Parents of OCSS' videos are ways we at HRA have of showing New York City parents we recognize who they are and how much they care about their children."

Touching approximately one out of every six children in New York City, OCSS has made significant progress under the de Blasio administration including:

- **Collecting more than \$3 billion during Mayor de Blasio’s first term.** The vast majority of custodial parents on the OCSS caseload receive 100 percent of the money collected on their behalf, providing an average of approximately \$700 million per year in income to largely low-income parents across the city. About \$60 million per year of the \$760 million average annual child support collected between 2014 and 2017 was retained by the government to recover the costs associated with Cash Assistance.
- **Reducing more than \$100 million in child support debt owed to the government.** To eliminate the barriers that child support debt can create, OCSS created programs, including its popular Pay It Off program, to help parents reduce that debt. By the end of 2017, OCSS had reduced more than \$100 million in debt owed by noncustodial parents to the New York City government for periods when their children received Cash Assistance.
- **Connecting thousands of noncustodial parents to employment.** OCSS helps noncustodial parents find work through its Support Through Employment Program (STEP), leading thousands of parents to find work or to begin paying their child support. In 2017 alone OCSS collected nearly \$54 million in child support from current or former STEP participants.
- **Changing its name to put the focus on services.** Formerly called the Office of Child Support Enforcement, the program was renamed the Office of Child Support Services in November 2017 to draw attention to the variety of services the program now offers. For the mothers and fathers who receive child support (called “custodial parents”), those services include establishing child support orders, medical support orders, and legal fatherhood (paternity) and then collecting and distributing child support payments and enforcing those orders as needed. For the mothers and fathers who pay child support (called “noncustodial parents”), OCSS offers an increasing number of services, including assistance with bringing their child support orders in alignment with their income and programs to reduce or eliminate child support debt and to connect noncustodial parents to employment.

As part of this celebration OCSS will distribute a special City calendar geared toward children whose parents live apart, age-appropriate books, and other items for the children on the program’s caseload.

OCSS’s annual *My Sticker Calendar* is a sixteen-month calendar that combines colorful artwork created by children visiting OCSS offices with insightful parenting tips. Children use the calendar’s hundreds of stickers, printed in English and Spanish, to help them plan their future and to reinforce their sense of control over their lives as they move between their parents’ households. The calendar is being distributed in all New York City Child Support Offices, as well as Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Family Shelters and Family Independence Administration (FIA) Job Centers on a limited basis.

To learn more about the child support program, visit www.nyc.gov/hra/ocss.

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