

# **FY 2025 Borough Budget Consultations**

## **Manhattan - Administration for Children's Services**

**Meeting Date: September 6, 2023**

The purpose of holding the Borough Budget Consultations is to provide Community Boards with important information to assist in drafting their statement of District Needs and Budget Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. Community Board Members do not have expertise about funding sources and the process within agencies regarding funding of various programs and initiatives. However, Community Board members are very knowledgeable about local service needs.

This year's Manhattan agendas have three sections:

I. General questions about program funding.

1. What programs will see a significant increase or decrease in funding overall? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?
2. Which programs will be new or eliminated entirely?
3. What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?
4. What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY25 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY26 ?

II. Considering the current migrant crisis in NYC, what do the impacted agencies expect regarding continued influx in FY 25 and what are plans to accommodate this.

III. What are the plans to accommodate a possible extension of PEGs into FY 25?

IV. Lastly, the agendas may include Boards' requests on district-specific budget questions that will not be included in district level consultations. We request that the agency respond in writing, but have any further discussions on these items with the Community Boards outside of the consultation.

Please provide written responses or even a PowerPoint presentation that we can use to fully and accurately educate our Board Members.

General questions about program funding.

- **What programs will see a significant increase or decrease in funding overall? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?**
- **Which programs will be new or eliminated entirely?**
- **What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?**
- **What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY25 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY26 ?**

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes the safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare and juvenile justice services, child care assistance, and other community supports so families and children can thrive. The agency's adopted budget for FY2024 is approximately \$2.74 billion overall, including \$863 million in City Tax Levy (CTL) funding.

In child welfare, ACS invests in community-based non-profit **prevention** programs that provide free and voluntary services. ACS also contracts with nonprofit organizations that provide **foster care** services for children unable to safely remain at home.

Each year, the agency's Division of **Child Protection** responds to over 55,000 reports of possible child abuse or maltreatment, and works to connect families to the resources and services that can enable children to remain safely at home.

In **juvenile justice**, ACS manages and contracts for the continuum of services including intensive community-based alternatives for youth and their families, detention and placement.

ACS also connects families and children to the **critical supports** they need to thrive. Our work includes the provision of **child care assistance** to help families afford quality care; development and execution of strategies to prevent child injury and promote child safety; and investment in community-based approaches to enhance well-being of children, caregivers, and communities.

ACS is committed to helping build a New York City that is more safe, just and equitable for children and families.

- Through **Child and Family Well-being**, ACS designs and executes strategies that draw on community and family strengths in order to support caregivers, children, and communities, so they can thrive. CFWB provides child care vouchers, funds a network of Family Enrichment Centers and Community Partnerships, and provides child safety education and resources to parents and child-serving professionals. \$510 million is allocated in FY2024.

- In **Prevention Services**, ACS contracts with nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize at-risk families with prevention services that address common family challenges including family communication, homemaking, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, economic mobility, housing instability and more. Prevention services are free, available citywide, and reach more than 15,000 families with more than 33,000 children per year. \$352 million is allocated in FY2024.
- In **Family Permanency**, ACS contracts with non-profit organizations to provide foster care services. There are approximately 6,600 NYC children in foster care (compared with more than 50,000 NYC children in foster care 28 years ago, and 15,000 just a decade ago). For children who enter foster care, we have increased the proportion who are placed with “kin”—relatives, family friends, or other close adults—to more than half. The total foster care budget including adoption subsidies and foster care support and services is \$991 million in FY2024
- **Juvenile Justice** administers services for youth and families including detention, residential placement, and intensive community-based programs. \$216 million is allocated in FY2024.

With regard to federal stimulus funding, ACS received \$4.9M in FY 21 and \$9.1M annually from FY 22 through FY 25 in connection with the American Rescue Plan Act to provide financial assistance to non-profit human service partners to negate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

In addition, the stimulus bills included funding to the state for child care. ACS has \$230m in pandemic funding as part of previously allocated NYS Child Care Block Grant funds to support child care subsidy expansion through September 30, 2023 and \$115m through September 30, 2024.

Despite the challenging budget situation, ACS did not need to eliminate programs or services that would negatively impact children or families. ACS was able to realize a savings in our prevention portfolio with a \$3.2 million CTL reduction that better aligned spending patterns and utilization. We were similarly able to reduce capacity in our Close to Home program by closing one of our limited secure programs for girls, which had no youth in it for almost 2 years.

New programs for ACS include Promise NYC, school-based prevention programs, a scholarship program for our providers, and College Choice.

- **Promise NYC**: ACS’s FY2024 Adopted Budget included \$16 million (up from \$10 million in FY23) to support child care assistance for undocumented children. Launched in January 2023, Promise NYC is a new child care assistance program that provides child care assistance to low-income families with children, including undocumented children, whose immigration status makes them

ineligible for other, federally-funded child care assistance. ACS has contracted with four community-based organizations with experience and expertise serving communities and families impacted by immigration to help launch the program – in Manhattan, NMIC is the lead organization.

- **School based prevention:** In August 2023, ACS released an RFP for school-based prevention services, to replace the Beacon prevention model funded at \$22 million. The Division of Prevention Services (DPS) in the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) seeks to contract with providers to deliver the School-Based Early Support model (formerly the ACS Beacon Prevention model) through this Request for Proposals (RFP). As a part of our strategic priorities for the coming year, this RFP represents an opportunity to re-imagine one way in which ACS might engage the New York City Public Schools differently to strengthen the array of supports available to families and ease access to same. This RFP builds on a number of ACS’s recent efforts to collaborate more closely with the DOE to identify families who would benefit from community-based support and as a result “narrow the front door” to the child welfare system in New York City.

Through this program redesign, ACS intends to offer families a menu of flexible service options that strive to connect families to community resources through case management, address families’ concrete needs, support parents/caregivers, and avoid unnecessary investigations.

ACS anticipates that **1,280** slots of School-Based Early Support services will be funded through this RFP. It is anticipated that **1,152** of these will operate according to the programmatic eligibility for prevention services in accordance with New York State law and regulations and OCFS guidance. ACS anticipates that School-Based Early Support services (specifically case management) will be available for **128** additional families without opening a prevention services case. There will also be opportunities for families to participate in co-designed school-based offerings without opening a prevention services case. ACS anticipates awarding 16 contracts as a result of the RFP.

- Provider scholarship program: ACS created a new scholarship program supporting provider staff who are committed to working in child welfare and juvenile justice systems and want to obtain their Master’s in social work. The program is funded at \$500K each year.
- College Choice: ACS created a College Choice program that helps eligible Foster care youth to pay for college, tuition, housing and \$60 daily stipend to be used towards food, clothing, transportation and more. The current funding is approximately \$10M

Capital Priorities, Operational, and Capital Goals: ACS in collaboration with DDC are in the design review phase to expand capacity and programming for secure detention,

which is budgeted for \$343 million. With respect to Information Technology, ACS plans to upgrade infrastructure, switches, video surveillance systems, facility management and maintenance system (Archibus) and purchase an automated child information system (ACCIS) to keep track of children under ACS care. The total of these information technology projects for FY 25 and FY 26 total \$42 million.

**II. Considering the current migrant crisis in NYC, what do the impacted agencies expect regarding continued influx in FY 25 and what are plans to accommodate this.**

Meeting the needs of migrant children, youth and families in New York City is an important priority for ACS.

ACS has been collaborating with city agencies and partner organizations to provide much needed support and services to the many asylum seekers arriving in New York City. Throughout the City's response, ACS staff have been at the navigation center distributing diapers and supplies, providing referrals to health and mental health services, and offering interpretation services. Additionally, the Division of Prevention Services has been working closely with local providers to better support the newly arrived families. For instance, providers are now onsite at nearly thirty locations where they are making assessments, providing referrals to other community providers or services provided by their organization. Prevention providers are also engaging individual families who may need longer term support. Sixteen prevention providers are at twenty-five DHS-led hotels throughout the five boroughs. Five providers are also on site at the four Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCS), which are run by NYC Health and Hospitals. DPS will continue to manage these efforts and ensure that key locations are being supported with volunteers.

**III. What are the plans to accommodate a possible extension of PEGs into FY 25?**

ACS continues to be in ongoing conversations with OMB about any potential PEGs in FY25. At this time, there have been no decisions that there will be any additional PEGs.

**AGENDA ITEM [1]: Promise NYC**

Promise NYC as we understand it is a program to provide child care services to undocumented children and their families, which speaks to the ongoing crisis of making provision to welcome asylum-seekers and others who come to our City without the prescribed documentation.

We understand that in FY 2023, \$10 Million was allocated to this program to provide this service to approximately 600 children, with at least another 300 children eligible for the service.

Please provide:

- The updated FY 2024 and projected 2025 funding levels for Promise NYC.
- Indication as to what (if any) portion of that funding is baselined for future years.
- Identify the funding source for Promise NYC.

## **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ACS's FY2024 Adopted Budget included \$16 million in *one-time funds* to maintain a full year of care for 600-700 children enrolled in PromiseNYC. Federal and state rules prohibit the use of federal or state funds for child care for undocumented children. Thus, all of the funding for the program is city funds. ACS and OMB are in ongoing discussion about the future of the program.

In the FY23 Adopted Budget, ACS received \$10M in one-time funds for a new program to provide child care assistance to low-income families with children whose immigration status makes them ineligible for other federally-funded child care assistance programs. ACS contracted with four community-based organizations with experience and expertise serving communities and families impacted by immigration – NMIC is the CBO running PromiseNYC in Manhattan. The program was launched citywide in January 2023 with the goal of providing child care assistance to 600 children.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

### **NEW INFORMATION:**

### **FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

## **AGENDA ITEM [2]: Special Child Care Funding - Vouchers**

Special Child Care Funding (SCCF) for vouchers to provide subsidized child care services to eligible families was restored in the ACS FY 2023 budget in the amount of \$9.2 Million, which provided such services to approximately 700 children.

Please provide the following information:

- What funding has been allocated in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 for SCCR vouchers?
- Have any funds for this program been reallocated from other programs, and if so, from what agency or program?
- Have any changes been made in the criteria for eligibility for these vouchers/services?
- What is the current estimate of demand for such vouchers?

- What funding level would be required to meet the currently unmet demand for these vouchers?

## **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

SCCF vouchers were city-funded vouchers put in place at a time when there were no available state or federal funds for vouchers. The eligibility requirements for SCCF vouchers were the same as for the state and federally funded Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) vouchers. Over the past few years, funding for CCBG vouchers has increased significantly, allowing us to issue vouchers to families without the need for SCCF funding. ACS no longer has funding in our budget for SCCF vouchers, however, we are still able to serve families citywide with CCBG vouchers.

We are excited about a number of efforts that have gone into effect over the last year that have allowed ACS to expand child care assistance to families across New York City. Over the last year, the number of low income children enrolled in child care with the support of an ACS low income voucher has increased from under 8,000 to over 22,000.

In October 2022, we opened up child care voucher applications to families across New York City – any low-income families with children across New York City has been able to apply for, and if found eligible, receive a voucher.

We've prioritized outreach and engagement for child care assistance in 17 communities across the city with high poverty and unemployment that lack adequate access to child care. This effort is critical to driving a more equitable access to support.

In Manhattan, our Priority CDs are: CD MN10 Central Harlem, CD MN11 East Harlem, and CD MN12 Washington Heights/Inwood.

We also recently launched the first ever online application for child care assistance through the MyCity portal. This makes it easier than ever to apply for care – the application is easy to understand, user friendly, and efficient. Families can access the application at [mycity.nyc.gov](https://mycity.nyc.gov).

Additionally, after successful advocacy by New York City, the state of New York raised the income eligibility for child care assistance from 200 to 300 percent of the federal poverty level, allowing more families to meet eligibility for child care assistance.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

ACS - We're always working to increase income eligibility and opening up access generally for families across the City. there's no longer a waitlist. three priority neighborhoods in Manhattan (high poverty...MN10, MN11, and MN12). Going forward, we may see more outreach events to get the word out to families.

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [3]: Child Protective Service Specialists’ Average Caseload**

Recent trends in FYs 2022-23-24 reflected a consistent decline in the average caseload for child protective service specialists. We understand caseloads were 9.8 Citywide and 8.4 for Manhattan at the beginning of FY 2023 (below the target of 12).

- Please update this information with current and projected caseloads.
- Have the number of complaints changed to pre-Covid levels? What impact has the change, if any, had on average caseloads?
- Is additional funding needed to maintain or further decrease the average caseloads on the current trajectory?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

Child abuse and neglect reports declined sharply during the COVID pandemic from approximately 65,000 in CY 2019 to 51,000 in CY 2020. By 2022 they rose to 59,000, 10% below pre-pandemic levels. Child protection caseloads have also remained low since the pandemic. Within the Division of Child Protection, the average caseload is 7.2 families per caseworker in Manhattan as of 8/7/23. Please note that average caseloads vary, and cases are assigned by family (i.e., 1 case = 1 family). ACS is able to hire ahead of attrition for CPS. Caseloads for ACS CPS are well below the New York State recommended caseload of no more than 15 active cases, as well as the national Child Welfare League of America recommendation of no more than 12.

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [4]: Child Protective Services**

Please provide an update on the

- funding,
- capacity and
- results



of ACS's programs to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our children, including without limitation:

- The Child and Family Well-being program that provides a variety of supports aimed at preventing instances that would otherwise escalate into child protective services cases, including:
  - Family Enrichment Centers
  - Community organizations providing primary support
  - child care vouchers
- Other Prevention Services, including those provided by community-based organizations, as well as the Family Assessment Program (FAP), the Family Stabilization program
- Services specifically addressing issues of mental health and mental illness for
  - at risk children
  - their families
- Alternative juvenile justice initiatives and diversion programs

## **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ACS has a responsibility to respond to all reports made to the Statewide Central Register (SCR) regardless of the seriousness of the reported concerns. Prior to 2014, low to moderate risk reports received the same investigative response as high risk and serious allegations of abuse. In 2014, the FAR (Family Assessment Response) alternative track response to low and moderate risk cases was piloted in Queens. While monitoring the trends of investigation determinations, it was noted that most investigations, roughly 60-65% were unfounded. It was also noted that most reports pertained to neglect. These trends indicated that there was a need to respond to families differently that were reported due to lack of basic needs and resources. Therefore, a progressive expansion of the FAR alternative track was initiated and continues throughout 2023. FAR, currently known as CARES (Collaborative Assessment Response Engagement and support) provides a less intrusive, solution focused and family- led response to low and moderate risk SCR reports. CARES focuses on family engagement and partnering with families to connect them with services that meet their needs. Since CARES does not require an investigation determination at the conclusion of the case, the response is considered one of ACS' racial equity strategies due to less impact on African- American/ Black and Hispanic/Latinx families employment opportunities. CARES is available to families throughout the city in all boroughs. There 49 CARES units citywide with 6 active units in Manhattan. By the end of 2023, there will be 2 additional CARES units in Manhattan and 64 CARES Units Citywide. CARES expansion is made possible by converting existing Child Protective and Educational Neglect Units to CARES Units. The conversion of existing units does not require additional funding for the Division of Child Protection because existing units are converted to CARES units.

ACS has a nationally recognized continuum of prevention services. We contract with about 120 programs across the City. We have seen foster care continue to decline to an all-time low of about 6,600 children in foster care. Our new prevention continuum ensures that every model is available to families regardless of where they live. Family voice and choice is a critical component to our work with families.

Our prevention services are voluntary, free and available regardless of immigration status. We contract with community-based organizations across the city to offer a range of free, voluntary prevention services that promote child safety and support families through a range of challenges that families may experience—from meeting basic needs for housing, food, clothing, etc., handling every day parenting difficulties like child care, improving family communication, parenting programs, supporting children with special medical needs, addressing family violence, or accessing help for mental health or substance misuse concerns.

Families receiving prevention services can also access homemaking services if eligible. These services include child caring instructions and home management skills training for parents and caregivers. ACS currently contracts with 6 human services/home care providers to serve families in all five boroughs.

In addition, ACS prevention services have been offering parents access to GABI (Group Attachment Based Intervention) since 2017. GABI is an intervention designed to meet the emotional challenges of socially isolated families who struggle with parent-child relationships. It serves parents of young children ages 0 through 3 years old who have experienced significant trauma, housing instability, mental illness, domestic violence, and other challenges that make parenting a very young child difficult. GABI is offered as a clinical enhancement to families receiving non-therapeutic ACS prevention services across 6 sites in NYC. GABI seeks to improve children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, decrease their exposure to trauma and maltreatment, reduce stress, and boost parental social support and mental health.

During CY 2022 **33,262 children** in **15,286 families** received prevention services. Each year, ACS conducts a survey of families who have participated in prevention services. From the 2022 survey approximately **94%** of survey participants said they are happy with the prevention services their families received; and **90%** of participants said that they would recommend these services to a friend and/or family member. Overall, **90%** of survey participants said prevention services are helping them achieve their goals

More information about our prevention programs is available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/for-families/in-your-home.page>

In addition, ACS currently supports 12 Family Enrichment Centers (FECs). Due to the success of the first 3 demonstration sites, we are in the process of expanding from 3 to 30 FECs. The new centers are and will be located in neighborhoods hit hardest by COVID. The first 9 new FECs opened this year and include 2 in Manhattan. Union

Settlement received the contract for East Harlem and Living Redemption received the contract for Central Harlem. The East Harlem FEC is called East Side S.O.U.L. (Safe Oasis United by Love) and the Central Harlem FEC is named The H.A.V.E.N. (Harlem Achieving Victorious Excellence Now). Last August, we released an RFP for the next 8 FECs, which includes 1 more in Manhattan in Washington Heights/Inwood (awarded to Children's Arts and Science Workshops, Inc.) The RFP for the remaining 10 FECs was issued this past month and includes 2 more FECs in Manhattan (Lower East Side/Chinatown and Morningside Heights/Hamilton Heights.)

The FECs are walk-in community centers that are co-designed with local families and community members with the goal of setting families up to thrive so that they have support and resources to weather challenges. Doing so, also reduces the risk of child welfare involvement. The FECs work hand-in-hand with community members to provide concrete resources and other offerings responsive to their needs and interests. In particular, the FECs provided crucial support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including food, clothing, and technology needs, as well as social supports to parents and caregivers.

ACS's **Family Assessment Program (FAP)** provides support to families and youth up to age 18 who are struggling with everyday challenges. FAP works to strengthen families, reduce conflict, and help families handle concerns such as a child running away, skipping school, using drugs or alcohol, or showing disruptive or dangerous behavior. The FY2024 budget for FAP is \$14.7 million.

FAP services are voluntary, and each family can receive an individualized assessment with a social worker who specializes in family crisis resolution. Our FAP offices connect families to our FAP Service Continuum or to community-based organizations, based on the needs of the family. In Queens, the FAP Service Continuum includes the below services:

- **Family Stabilization, Children's Aid.** An intensive crisis intervention that engages and assess the family for a period of no longer than 60 days to effectively create a collaborative service plan.
- **Mentoring and Advocacy Program (MAAP) and Fair Futures, CASES.** Individualized, strength and advocacy-based wraparound support services for youth. Each youth is matched with a credible messenger/mentor whose focus is to provide guidance in developing better self-esteem, creating healthy relationships, and making positive life choices
- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Children's Aid.** An intensive evidence-based family treatment model that consists of a small team of highly trained therapists that provide therapeutic sessions in the home over a four-month period.
- **Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), New York Foundling.** A 16-week evidence-based family intervention developed for treatment of families with children 6-18 years old that focuses on the family as the most influential context

for youth, to help create healthier family functioning and address youth at-risk and drug use behaviors.

- **Multi-Systemic Therapy Substance Abuse Adaptation (MST-SA), Children's Aid.** A very intensive evidence-based therapeutic intervention that provides therapy to the entire family in the home over a period of four months. Therapists visit the home multiple times per week and are available by phone 24 hours a day.
- **Juvenile Justice Respite Program, Rising Ground.** For youth who are most at risk of placement or detention, Respite is a 21-day voluntary program that aims to de-escalate conflict within families and improve individual and family functioning by placing the youth temporarily out of the family home and into a home with a highly trained foster parent, while working closely with the parent to improve family functioning so that the youth can return home.

Our FAP offices are located in each borough at or near the Family Court and all inquiries and assessments can be done in person or via phone and/or video. Our FAP Service Providers are able to serve families in person and virtually. Please reach FAP by email [FAPinquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:FAPinquiry@acs.nyc.gov) and by phone:

- Bronx office: 718-664-1800
- Brooklyn office: 646-584-5178 / 347-907-0464 / 646-584-8935
- **Manhattan office: 212-341-0012**
- Queens office: 646-599-3308 / 718-725-3244
- Staten Island office: 718-720-0418 / 646-276-4170

The email box and phones are answered Monday through Friday 9-5, and all messages will be returned.

As a result of ACS's role administering detention and Close to Home provides, ACS had a unique perspective into the needs of youth in the justice system. As a result, Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs transferred from MOCJ to ACS. ACS issued an RFP and the new contracts started July 1, 2023. Three providers were selected for the awards: Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) for Manhattan and the Bronx; Justice Innovation Center (JIC) for Queens and Staten Island; and Good Shepherd Services for Brooklyn. ATD programs allow youth charged as juvenile delinquents in Family Court to remain at home with supervision and support while their case is pending, in lieu of entering a juvenile detention facility. The ATD programs have the capacity to serve up to 310 youth annually.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

MN - Current budget impediments?

ACS - No. We have no waitlists and have vacancies in all of these programs. "None of these are struggling due to the budget."

## **NEW INFORMATION:**

## **FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

## **AGENDA ITEM [5]: Foster Care**

Recent trends have shown a steady decrease in the number of children placed in Foster Care. We understand this is in part the result of the success of prevention and diversion programs that aim to keep families together with dedicated supports, when feasible and appropriate.

Please provide updates on the funding allocations in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 relating to the following:

- How many children were placed in Foster Care through ACS as of the beginning of FY2024?
- What funding allocation is contained in the FY 2024 adopted budget for the Foster Care system?
- Are there placements that cannot be made due to insufficient funds in this program?
- Are City Tax Levy funds still sufficient to replace the loss of \$120 Million in federal funds as of the beginning of FY 2023?

Please also provide an update on the Fair Futures program, which provides direct coaching and tutoring support for youth in Foster Care, including the following:

- What funding is allocated in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 for this program?
- In FY 2023, additional funding enabled the expansion of the age group served by this program from 11-21 to 11-26. Is sufficient funding available in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 to continue to serve the expanded age group?
- How many youth are served currently by this program? What is the goal for the population to be served? How many youth currently are eligible for this program but cannot be served due to budget or other constraints?

### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

At the start of FY24, there were approximately 6,600 NYC children in foster care (compared with more than 50,000 NYC children in foster care 28 years ago, and 15,000 just a decade ago). For children who enter foster care, we have increased the proportion who are placed with “kin”—relatives, family friends, or other close adults—to more than half. The total foster care budget including adoption subsidies and foster care support and services is \$991 million in FY2024. We continue to assess our foster care budget with OMB.

ACS and the foster care providers continue to implement the new Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC) program, which replaced the separately contracted Family Foster Care (FFC) and Therapeutic Family Foster Care (TFFC) programs. EFFC provides increased therapeutic resources and services, responding to the increased acute needs of children in foster care and allows for greater flexibility of services based on the changing needs of the child and family. EFFC expands resources and scaling of proven practices in the following key areas of foster care case practice:

- Reunification supports including:
  - Family time (also known as family visiting)
  - Parent supports and services to stabilize and strengthen families

- Parent advocates as credible messengers assigned to support all families with a goal of reunification
- Foster parents' role in supporting parents to improve reunification outcomes
- Utilization of ACS Prevention and other community-based services before, during and after reunification in order to support families and help prevent re-entry into foster care
- Best practices and innovative approaches to:
  - identifying kinship resources
  - recruiting, training and supporting kinship and foster parents to improve children's experience while in foster care placement and permanency outcomes
- Adoption and KinGAP practice including therapeutic work with youth, parents, and foster/adoptive parents to facilitate permanency, including open adoption where appropriate
- Strategies for reducing the use of APPLA and achieving legal permanency for older youth
- Education and employment services to improve well-being outcomes for children and youth
- Continued low caseworker caseloads and enhanced training and professional development for the child welfare workforce
- New performance-based fiscal structures that maintain provider fiscal and organizational health, including the costs necessary to maintain adequate staffing and infrastructure to support a high quality foster care system

ACS has procured new contracts for foster care services to support and scale these practices.

As a result of an RFP, the awards were announced in early 2023 – ACS is contracting with 22 agencies to provide family based foster care, 14 agencies to provide residential care services, and five agencies to provide specialized family foster care.

The 22 non-profit organizations ACS is contracting with for family-based foster care are: Abbott House, Cardinal McCloskey Community Services, Catholic Guardian Services, Cayuga Family Services, Children's Aid Society, Children's Village, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, Forestdale Inc., Good Shepherd Services, Graham Windham, HeartShare St. Vincent's Services, Jewish Child Care Association, Little Flower Children's & Family Services, Lutheran Social Services, MercyFirst, New Alternatives for Children Inc., New York Foundling, Ohel Children's Home and Family Services, Rising Ground, SCO Family of Services, Seamen's Society for Children and Families, and St. Dominic's Family Services.

The five non-profit organizations ACS is contracting with for specialized family foster care are: Catholic Guardian Services, Children's Aid Society, HeartShare St.

Vincent's Services, Jewish Child Care Association and New Alternatives for Children, Inc.

The 14 non-profit organizations ACS is contracting with for residential services are: Abbott House, Catholic Guardian Services, Children's Village, Good Shepherd Services, HeartShare St. Vincent's Services, Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Jewish Child Care Association, Lutheran Social Services, Martin de Porres, MercyFirst, New York Foundling, Rising Ground, SCO Family of Services, and St. John's Residence.

In collaboration with the foster care agencies, ACS is continuing to implement a shared framework across prevention and foster care services that aims to shorten stays in foster care when such care is necessary, and to provide greater support and stability to families during the often-challenging period of reunification following foster care. The new foster care contracts seek to achieve the following goals:

- Improve safety, well-being and permanency outcomes for children in foster care
- Safely reduce time to permanency (reunification, adoption and kinship guardianship)
- Implement services that are fully informed by the experiences and perspectives of youth and parents and which are designed to maximize youth and parent engagement
- Scale the workforce of parent advocates with lived experience across all contracted foster care providers, in order to enable every parent with a child in foster care with a goal of reunification to have a parent advocate assigned
- Reduce the use of the Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) goal and the numbers and proportion of youth who exit foster care to independence
- Increase placement with kinship caregivers
- Implement best practices and innovative approaches to recruiting, training and supporting kinship and foster parents
- Reduce utilization of residential care settings; reducing lengths of stay in residential settings and increasing the pace of step-downs to family-based care
- Improve health, mental health and educational outcomes of children in foster care
- Effectively coordinate foster care and prevention services and leveraging other community-based services to provide seamless services, greater stability, and improved outcomes for children and families
- Provide the resources necessary to support a well-prepared and stable workforce that delivers high-quality services to meet families' and children's needs

### Fair Futures:

ACS has been strengthening the foster care system and implementing changes to make sure more and more doors of opportunity are open for youth in foster care, including through the implementation of “Fair Futures.” “Fair Futures” is a groundbreaking, first of its kind public-private partnership, that provides dedicated coaches, tutors and education, employment and housing specialists for youth with foster care involvement ages 11 to 26. Through Fair Futures, we support young people in the achievement of key milestones that put them on a path to success after they leave foster care to permanency or independent living. When it first launched in 2019, it provided thousands of youth ages 11 to 21 in foster care with coaches. The Adams administration recently provided additional resources to ACS so that we can expand the program to youth ages 21 to 26 and to youth in our juvenile justice programs. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. Fair Futures is also exploring programming focused on providing youth with culturally appropriate therapeutic options that offer trauma-informed tele-therapy as well as options through art, yoga, and meditation.

The expansion of Fair Futures from ending at age 21, to go up to age 26, will enable youth leaving care to maintain the critical support of their coach through the challenging transitions that come with leaving care and becoming adults. In FY 2023, Fair Futures served nearly 4,000 young people.

In FY23, FY24 and beyond, \$30.7 million is baselined for Fair Futures (\$20 million in city funds and \$10.7 million in state/federal revenue, all of which is baselined.) This enabled the program to expand to foster youth ages 21-26 through existing foster care contracts, as well as youth involved with the juvenile justice system through the community-based alternatives, detention, and Close to Home contracts. We anticipate serving over 4,000 youth this year and at this time, we have sufficient funding to serve all youth interested in the program.

The provider agencies had the flexibility to use their allocations to best meet the needs of the youth they served. Providers used funds for the following staff:

- Coaches
- Case aides (to support the integration of family stability and permanency)
- College/education specialists
- Housing specialists
- Employment/Internship specialists
- Tutoring

### **MEETING NOTES:**

ACS - This funding is not baselined. Right now, we're fine, but if there's a big influx, then we would need to discuss this with OMB.



**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [6]: Foster Care 2024-28 Plan**

To the extent not included in the responses above, please briefly summarize the

- approach,
- funding,
- capacity and
- utilization

of the following elements of the Foster Care 2024-28 Five Year Foster Care Plan, including without limitation:

- the Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC) program, including without limitation the new family and residential foster care contracts under the EFFC program.
- the Parents Empowering Parents program
- the Family time program
- programs to identify or reunite children/youth with relatives
- the Trauma-Responsive and Informed Parenting (TRIPP) program
- The Fostering Connection for long-term psychotherapy post-Foster Care eligibility.

The 2024-28 Plan includes calls for closer collaboration with other City Agencies, especially the Department of Education, NYCHA, DYCD, and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, as well as not-for-profit-sponsored programs through such partners as Columbia University, the Kellogg Foundation, CUNY, New Yorkers for Children, the Children’s Aid Society, and others to provide more integrated and long-term services.

What funding is necessary for a formalized and sustainable collaboration among agencies as called for by the Plan? Please provide the funding in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 for the in-house staffing and outside service providers needed at ACS and at partner agencies to ensure that the collaboration is effective and that the individuals tasked with such inter-agency cooperation have workloads that allow meaningful dialogue and synergies. Please compare the anticipated funding need with the actual FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 allocations for these initiatives.

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

The total foster care budget including adoption subsidies and foster care support and services is \$991 million in FY2024

ACS has dramatically reduced the number of children in foster care to a historic low of fewer than 7,000 children in care, down from 13,000 in care a decade ago. Over the past several years, ACS made strides in the areas of permanency, foster home recruitment, and improving the well-being of children in foster care. Successful implementation of effective permanency practices, foster home recruitment strategies,

Fair Futures, College Choice and various Workforce Development initiatives contributed to these achievements. Additionally, ACS and foster care providers have increased the number of children placed with kin.

The FY2024–FY2028 ACS Foster Care Five-Year Plan is informed by the lessons learned from the previous five-year plan and information gathered from a large-scale case review.

After a series of conversations with stakeholders and analysis of recent data in 2022, ACS arrived at these four Core Collective Priorities, which will serve, and guide New York City foster care practice moving forward. The collective priorities are as follows:

*f* Meet the present need with sufficient capacity

- Work with foster care agencies to revamp, recruit and train foster parents and ensure they foster parents have the supported needed to increase high quality certified homes
- Focus on identifying and supporting kinship parents
- Leveraging resources and funding to invest in staff of foster care programs

*f* Focus on family

- Consistently involve youth in permanency planning and service plan development.
- Effectively engage parents in the case planning process through the use of parent advocates.
- Expand access to mental health and supportive services for children and families.
- Proactively plan and assess for the safe reunification of children.
- Intentionally place children with kin, which can increase the use of KinGAP (kinship guardianship) as a permanency option if reunification is not possible.
- Develop and streamline business processes on adoption and KinGAP.

*f* Create safety and stability

- Provide safe, stable placements for children and youth in foster care.
- Implement robust foster parent support, recruitment, and certification strategies.
- Offer training for foster parents and staff.
- Support children and youth with higher needs in both family-based and residential programs.

*f* Ensure child and youth success and improved well-being

- Enhance partnerships with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Youth and Community Development to expand academic enrichment and supports for children and youth in foster care.
- Leverage Fair Futures to provide dedicated coaches; tutors; and education, employment, and housing specialists for youth in foster care or to those who exited between the ages of 11 to 26.

- Use available supportive housing slots and provide accessible information on housing resources for youth and families.
- Scale college bound and college support programs for youth in foster care and continue to develop initiatives to enhance youth readiness for the world of work.

These core collective priorities align with ACS's values and promote safety, permanency, and improved well-being for New York City children, youth, and families.

ACS has sufficient resources to support youth as described above. As we continue to be innovative and develop new ideas, we also work with our Office of Public Private Partnership to secure philanthropic funding to support innovative services and programs. These efforts will continue in this current fiscal year and in Fiscal Year 2025.

### **MEETING NOTES:**

#### **NEW INFORMATION:**

#### **FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

## **AGENDA ITEM [7]: Aging out of Foster Care**

In ACS's detailed report at the FY 2023 budget consultation, the Agency provided a comprehensive roadmap of needs faced by individuals approaching and passing the point of aging out of foster care.

Please advise whether:

- the FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 budget allocations are anticipated to be sufficient to meet the level of need currently addressed by those programs
- whether additional funding is needed to meet current needs or the needs of those eligible but unable to access such programs and services due to budget shortfalls
- whether any new initiatives have emerged to supplement or supplant the initiatives and programs detailed in ACS's previous report.

### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

The number of youth in care between the ages of 18-20 that are discharged to themselves or reach the age of 21 in foster care has continued to decline. There were 500 such youth in CY 2022. At this time, ACS believes that are funding is sufficient, but we are continuing to monitor and discuss with OMB.

ACS has been strengthening the foster care system and implementing changes to make sure more and more doors of opportunity are open for youth in foster care, including through the implementation of "Fair Futures." "Fair Futures" is a groundbreaking, first of its kind public-private partnership, that provides dedicated

coaches, tutors and education, employment and housing specialists for youth with foster care involvement ages 11 to 26. Through Fair Futures, we support young people in the achievement of key milestones that put them on a path to success after they leave foster care to permanency or independent living. When it first launched in 2019, it provided thousands of youth ages 11 to 21 in foster care with coaches. The Adams administration recently provided additional resources to ACS so that we can expand the program to youth ages 21 to 26 and to youth in our juvenile justice programs. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. Fair Futures is also exploring programming focused on providing youth with culturally appropriate therapeutic options that offer trauma-informed tele-therapy as well as options through art, yoga, and meditation.

The expansion of Fair Futures from ending at age 21, to go up to age 26, will enable youth leaving care to maintain the critical support of their coach through the challenging transitions that come with leaving care and becoming adults.

ACS works diligently in partnership with Foster Care Providers to ensure youth aging out of foster care leave with safe and stable housing. Youth in foster care with an APPLA goal can apply to the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) with priority status (N-0). In addition to NYCHA, youth in foster care are eligible to receive Federal (Section 8), City funded (CITYFHEPS) vouchers or supportive housing services. ACS continues to support young adults with navigating the difficult housing process with services offered through ACS' Housing Academy Collaborative (HAC), the Fair Futures coaches and Foster Care providers Housing team.

In June 2023, ACS partnered with Anthos|Home and launched their efforts to support youth aging out of foster care by offering housing navigation and stability services to youth searching for a home with a housing voucher. Anthos|HOME aims to support ACS youth and families by connecting the Head of Household to available units with quality landlords quickly and efficiently, while receiving aftercare to remain housed for the long term.

This past year, ACS announced our new College Choice program. College Choice makes significant enhancements to several programs you're already familiar with: Fostering College Success Initiative (the "Dorm Project"), Fostering College Success Stipend, and College Room and Board. The purpose of these changes is to give youth more flexibility and options around what types of support they need while attending college, including where they can live. The program enables youth in foster care to attend the college of their choice without having to worry about the price tag. ACS will pay for the costs of tuition (not covered by other programs), housing, a \$60 per day stipend, and access to tutoring and coaching. This past year, 300 youth were enrolled in the College Choice program (up from 200 last year) and 25 youth in the program graduated from college.

ACS now offers a new vocational training and apprenticeship program that provides professional opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care. Announced by Mayor Adams in March 2022, the V-CRED program will support youth to increase their career and college readiness, achieve developmental milestones, and continue their personal development. V-CRED was created in partnership with the New Yorkers for Children, Commonpoint Queens Y, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The City University of New York (CUNY), and private sector employers. As part of the program, youth participate in training for professional certification through courses offered by CUNY's Continuing Education Programs, participate in paid internships/apprenticeships, and have opportunities for employment with the employer hosting the internship. V-CRED focuses on five career pathways: 1) Information Technology, 2) Electrician's Helper, 3) Allied Health (e.g. Certified Nursing Assistants, EKG Technician), 4) Pharmacy Technicians, and 5) Building Trades.

V-CRED is a 2-year pilot program with 90 slots, 45 slots per year. During the program, 37 youth from Queens applied and 11 youth enrolled. 4 youth completed training and internships for Drone Technology and Coding, 3 youth completed training for an 8-hour and 16-hour Security Guard certification license. They were employed immediately at Allied Universal for full-time jobs paying \$18 per hour. 2 youth completed training for Allied Health careers for EMT and 2 youth completed training and internships for virtual Peer Counseling.

Youth learn about the program through their foster care agencies and their Fair Futures coaches.

**MEETING NOTES:**

MN - Would like to expand to age 26...well-funded? Keeping pace with demand?

ACS – the funding we've received has been paying for the expansion (older ages). We have the necessary funding for the expansion of this program.

MN – Number of people served?

ACS – Fair Futures total funding is \$30.7M, and that includes expanding to age 26...close to home program...MAP program...do have the funding baselined in our budget going through FY25 and out. A little over 3,000 participants and nearly 4,000 in FY23.

## **AGENDA ITEM [8]: Juvenile Justice Programs**

Please provide a synopsis of the funding allocated in FY 2024 and projected FY 2025 for the programs administered by or through ACS with respect to services for justice-involved children and youth.

Please include:

- the funding amounts allocated in FY 2024 and projected needs for FY 2025
- the number of children and youth anticipated to need such services, and an estimate of any eligible individuals for whom services are not available due to funding or resource gaps.

The programs for which such funding summaries are needed include the following:

- Secure detention
- non-secure detention
- Close to Home program

- Juvenile Justice Respite program
- alternatives to detention such as Juvenile Justice Initiative
- any new diversion or alternative approach to juvenile justice-involvement

What funding is provided and necessary for wrap-around Mental Health and related necessary services on a timely basis for all eligible children and youth? To what extent are issues of pay parity contributing to delays in securing appointments for evaluations and interventions?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

In juvenile justice, ACS manages and contracts for the continuum of services including intensive community-based alternatives for youth and their families, detention and placement. ACS has \$216 million in our budget for juvenile justice services. At this time, we do not anticipate the need for additional funds, but are continuing to monitor and discuss with OMB.

The chart below shows the average number of youth served on any given day in FY2023:

average daily number of youth served: FY 2023

secure detention	198.3
NSD	34.7
CTH	50.2
FAP	279.1
JJI	33.1

In 2022, FAP served 2616 new families; 302 from Manhattan; ATD programs have the capacity to serve up to 310 youth; 40 from Manhattan; JJI serves approximately 200 youth each year; and the JJ Respite program has the capacity to serve approximately 80 youth annually (citywide). ACS is always assessing need and capacity and if there is an instance where need additional capacity for youth and their families, we will reach out to OMB. At this time, we have capacity and vacancies in these programs.

All youth in detention have an individualized treatment plan, based on their own needs. DYFJ partners with H + H Bellevue/NYU Medical Center to provide trauma-informed mental and behavioral health services to youth in our detention system. All youth receive an initial screening upon entering detention and the voluntary services offered to all youth in detention include psychiatric and psychological services (e.g., diagnostic, assessment, evaluation, and testing), and individual and group treatment modalities. We have psychiatrists, psychologists and licensed clinical social workers on site at both Horizon and Crossroads.

Therapeutic services are customized by the clinical staff to address the individual needs of all youth, and are determined by individual diagnosis, clinical acuteness, and other psychosocial factors. The frequency and duration of clinical appointments are determined based on the level of acuity and emergent needs.

Counseling, behavioral health services or medication are provided consistent with clinical standards of care. The level of services may be increased based on clinical acuteness. By partnering with H + H Bellevue, DYFJ is able to ensure that youth returning to the community are provided with referrals and even appointments, where possible, for continuing mental health services. The mental health team collaborates similarly with other facilities to ensure continuity of mental health care with minimal disruption.

Each Close to Home program is required to implement an evidence-based therapeutic program model that serves as the primary mechanism of behavioral support. These include the Integrated Treatment Model, Sanctuary and Positive Behavioral Intervention System. Through the chosen framework, youth address their interpersonal relationships, communication skills and emotional regulation. All Close to Home providers employ social workers and youth have access to therapeutic treatment in the facility and in the community. The after care model helps transition youth to therapy in the community.

**MEETING NOTES:**

ACS – In terms of budget, we're fine. 2,600 is the number of new families that are being served.

MN – Number of kids that need help who are still having problems? We have a lot of kids who have one or two parents who are incarcerated or gangs, etc. How come we can't do more for them? How can we not need more services and more money?

ACS – To be eligible, depends on your poverty level laid out by government.

ACS – We can talk afterwards if you want...we'd be happy to do that.

MN – Which providers do you work with, and break out by community board?

ACS – there's not Close to Home sites in Manhattan, but there are other types of programs that do serve Manhattan.

ACS – will try to get program by community district.

## **AGENDA ITEM [9]: Capital Projects Update**

Please provide an update on capital projects for Manhattan, including those included in the ACS FY 2020-29 plan.

Please provide the following summary information with respect to such capital projects:

- the location and nature of the facility or infrastructure at the core of the capital project
- the status of the project (e.g. in design; under construction; projected timetable)
- the funding allocated in FY 2024 and projected 2025 for each project, and the overall capital budget for such projects.
- The expected completion dates for such projects

### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ACS's ten-year capital plan is \$615.7 million from FY 2023 through FY 2032 and \$645.98 million through FY33 of which \$34.4 million falls into FY 2023 and \$62.3 million falls into FY 2024.

The bulk of ACS capital budget is composed of \$337.9 million for Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) and \$142.7 million for the Office of Information Technology projects for data encryption, virus protection, collaborative software, servers, and VoIP. RTA 2.0 has a **total of \$342.4 million currently committed to renovations at Horizon and Crossroads through FY33** which will provide the essential and comprehensive upgrades that both of our detention facilities require to become safe, state of the art facilities for youth.

This work will include critical infrastructure upgrades to HVAC, electric, and safety and security systems, as well as food service upgrades. **Importantly, we will expand programming, vocational, education, medical, mental health, and family visiting spaces, all of which will help us better meet the needs of youth, including the older population of youth we are now serving since Raise the Age.** We will also be allocating \$17.2 million in funds from Adolescent Facilities for the new electronic security lock system.

Additional planned projects include:

- Renovations to increase programmatic space at the **ACS Children's Center** (Manhattan CD 6) which is a 24/7 temporary care center for children entering foster care, funded at \$14.8 million.
- \$5.7 million to fund the **consolidation and relocation of Bronx borough office** located at 974 Morris Park Avenue. Expected completion in May 2023.

## MEETING NOTES:

## NEW INFORMATION:

## FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

### AGENDA ITEM [10]: Chronic Staffing and Hiring Shortages

Various Agencies have reported difficulties in hiring and retaining individuals to work in various professions and positions that require in-person and on-site work schedules. This trend became pronounced as various sectors began to emerge from the safety protocols implemented during or as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.



To what extent has ACS or its partner agencies and not-for-profit services providers experienced chronic difficulties in hiring or retaining qualified individuals for open positions? What if any additional funding would be considered necessary to overcome any such chronic gap in available staff?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

There is no question that the staff of ACS are working very hard. We have been focused on continuing to hire frontline workers, including YDS, CPS and FCLS attorneys.

We are currently utilizing various recruitment channels to attract highly qualified candidates for the positions of Child Protective Specialist (CPS), Youth Development Specialist (YDS), and Family Court Legal Services Attorney. This includes leveraging social media, professional networking sites, attending career fairs with various colleges/universities and community-based organizations, and NYC and ACS websites.

As a result of our recruitment efforts, we have been onboarding classes of CPS, YDS and attorneys (new classes of which started throughout the summer/early fall.)

ACS greatly appreciates the committed child welfare and juvenile justice staff who serve children, youth, and families with care and compassion each and every day. New York City has taken steps to better support the provider workforce, such as the city's workforce enhancement fund, ACS's Foster Care Workforce Enhancement, as well as our creation of the Provider Agency Scholarship Program to provide scholarships to provider. These initiatives and more are putting resources directly into the hands of our provider staff, and we will continue to seek ways to invest in these essential staff.

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [11]: Recommended Priorities for Community Board Budget Priorities or Advocacy**

What expense or capital budget needs would ACS recommend or encourage Community Boards to advocate be funded or expanded in FY 2025 and beyond?

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ACS appreciates the Manhattan Community Boards' commitment to the work of ACS and our efforts to address the safety and well-being of New York City's children, youth and families. We hope that the community boards can join us in our advocacy efforts to secure additional state and federal resources to address the migrant crisis and fund the services and supports families need.

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [12]: [Title]**

[Insert Question]

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [13]: [Title]**

[Insert Question]

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [14]: [Title]**

[Insert Question]

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

**AGENDA ITEM [15]: [Title]**

[Insert Question]

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

**MEETING NOTES:**

**NEW INFORMATION:**

**FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**