



*Alfonso Wyatt discusses the needs of New York City youth with community and religious leaders at DJJ roundtable.*

## **Department of Juvenile Justice Staff Meet With City Community and Religious Leaders to Support Juvenile Justice Reform Efforts**

On Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Department hosted a roundtable of religious and community leaders moderated by Alfonso Wyatt, Vice President of the Fund for the City of New York.

During the event, the Department provided an overview of detention, plus presentations on the Release to Parent Initiative, the Collaborative Family Initiative and the Workforce Lifeskills Initiative.

Nearly 20 organizations were represented at the event including Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York City, The New York Urban League, The Mission Society, and Medgar Evers College.

The Roundtable provided a valuable opportunity to make useful connections and exchange ideas on how to enhance services to our City’s young people. By engaging organizations and individuals active in communities throughout New York City and the boroughs, DJJ can expand options that return young people to their families, provide critical services without interruption and lessen the likelihood that juveniles will become involved in the juvenile justice system or return to detention in the future.

Nearly 6,000 juveniles enter the care and custody of DJJ each year, two-thirds of whom are identified with mental health needs. The Collaborative Family Initiative, an innovative program that was initiated in February 2007, has already realized significant results, returning youth to their homes and communities, involving their families and ensuring that they continue to receive services without interruption or delay.

“Today’s roundtable was an important and promising step toward helping our City’s young people in innovative and effective ways,” Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Nicole Halsey Mathieu said. “By bringing City government together with community based organizations and individuals committed to helping our City’s youth we can achieve results collectively that would be beyond our reach individually.”

