



Commissioner Neil Hernandez testifies before City Council Juvenile Justice Committee on DJJ's FY 2009 Executive Budget.

DJJ Testifies Before City Council Juvenile Justice Committee on the Agency's Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget

Commissioner Neil Hernandez testified before the New York City Council's Juvenile Justice Committee on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, where he discussed the DJJ Fiscal Year 2009 Executive Budget. The joint hearing of the Juvenile Justice and Finance Committee's of the Council was chaired by Council Members Sara Gonzalez and David Weprin. Commissioner Hernandez was joined at the hearing by First Deputy Commissioner Judith Pincus, Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Policy Jacqueline James, and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Herman Dawson

At the hearing DJJ discussed its accomplishments over the past year, including the implementation of several juvenile justice reform initiatives and a reduction in detention usage, as well as cost cutting measures that will be implemented in the coming fiscal year to cope with the City and State fiscal picture. The Department reported on the successes of the Collaborative Family Initiative (CFI) and the Release to Parent (RTP) initiative that both help keep youth in their communities and out of detention. These initiatives have helped to reduce detention usage and, through CFI, provide essential mental health services to youth once they are released from DJJ care.

DJJ reported that in Fiscal Year 2009, the agency will continue its successful initiatives such as RTP and CFI, as well as the recently launched LIFE Transitions initiative as developed by the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity and DJJ. As a cost cutting measure, the Department will close two of its non-secure group homes. The Bloomberg Administration will continue to fund CFI in Fiscal Year 2009.

The Department also highlighted several additional programs for youth in detention and their families. The programs include the Re-entry Supports (RSP) initiative that will help guide youth and their families through the juvenile justice and court systems, as well as a host of other programs for youth in DJJ care made possible by funding provided by the Juvenile Justice Committee.

At the hearing, Commissioner Hernandez spoke of the future of juvenile justice reform in New York City, stating "DJJ is committed to working both inside and outside detention with community based partners and stakeholders to provide the best services available to youth in detention."

