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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, DEPUTY MAYOR GIBBS AND PROBATION COMMISSIONER SCHIRALDI
LAUNCH FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY NETWORK – NeON – A CENTRAL ELEMENT OF
YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE**

***Young Men's Initiative is Nation's Most Comprehensive Effort to Tackle Broad Disparities
Affecting Advancement of Black and Latino Young Men***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs and Department of Probation Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi today opened the first Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) in Brooklyn. The NeON concept was introduced by Mayor Bloomberg in August when he launched the Young Men's Initiative, the nation's most comprehensive effort to tackle the broad disparities that affect the advancement of black and Latino young men. As a central element of the Young Men's Initiative, this initiative brings probation officers into community based offices in the neighborhoods where probation clients live and connects clients to local programs, opportunities and resources, with the aim of reducing their involvement with the criminal justice system. This model will enable the Probation Department to join and enrich local networks of residents, leaders, community-based organizations, businesses, educators, healthcare providers, City agencies and elected officials and help build stronger and safer neighborhoods. Over the next year, the City plans to create at least four additional NeON satellites. The Mayor was joined for the announcement by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

"In order to successfully improve outcomes for people in the justice system, we must be willing to make real and fundamental changes in how we interact with them," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The Neighborhood Opportunity Network provides probation clients with an entirely new way of relating to the Department of Probation and to their communities. It is exactly the sort of innovative solution I envisioned when I announced the Young Men's Initiative."

"The Neighborhood Opportunity Network will have a real and positive impact on the lives of probation clients in Brownsville and, soon enough, in neighborhoods throughout New York City," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "It's not just about creating offices that are located much closer to where people on probation actually live and work, although that is very important. It's also about connecting them to nearby partner organizations that can help them get a job, further their education, improve their health, and strengthen their family and neighborhood."

"Neighborhood Opportunity Networks will provide a multitude of services – everything from education and health care to job training and mentoring – to residents on probation in Brownsville and I'm thrilled this program is collaborating with my office's anti-violence task force," said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. "I applaud Mayor Bloomberg for his Young Men's Initiative and Commissioner Schiraldi and the Department of Probation for carrying out this innovative approach to keeping New Yorkers – particularly our young people –out of the criminal justice system and helping them reach the zenith of their God-given potential."

"The opening of the Brownsville NeON is the most tangible evidence of a sweeping reform effort that is remaking the way the NYC Department of Probation does business," said Commissioner Schiraldi. "Throughout the agency, we are implementing policies that reflect our beliefs that helping people find work, continue their education, support their families, and engage with their neighbors are the best ways to build stronger and safer communities. We are confident that the NeON will help us further reduce the number of people who are re-incarcerated each year, which has already dropped by 31% between Fiscal Years 2009 and 2011."

The NeON initiative is the cornerstone of the Department of Probation's (DOP) Young Men's Initiative involvement. DOP supervises just over 25,000 New Yorkers, the majority of whom are black and Latino males. DOP will open additional NeON offices in Harlem, East New York, Jamaica and the South Bronx next year. In most cases, NeON offices will co-locate with established community-based organizations.

Each NeON is built around an existing network of educational, business and community-based organizations, which DOP will join and strengthen to provide clients access to a broader array of resources, including literacy programs, work and employment preparation, health care, academic and technical education, afterschool activities and mentoring. NeON staff are specially trained to work in and with the community, connect clients to local resources, and build partnerships with organizations that provide the kinds of opportunities that probation clients need. NeON staff and clients will also work with local residents on development projects to address pressing neighborhood needs and encourage active citizenship. The NeON initiative is funded through existing DOP resources. DOP employees receive specialized training before they begin work at the NeONs, and in many cases they will be referring clients to programs created through the Young Men's Initiative and other public/private partnerships.

The Young Men's Initiative

The Young Men's Initiative, the nation's most comprehensive effort to tackle the broad disparities slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men, was announced in August. Through broad policy changes and agency reforms, a public-private partnership will invest in programs that will connect young men to educational, employment, and mentoring opportunities across more than a dozen city agencies. The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), established in 2006 by Mayor Bloomberg to implement innovative way to reduce poverty in New York City, is responsible for overseeing the implementation and evaluating many of the programs within the Young Men's Initiative. Support for the initiative is being provided by Open Society Foundations and Bloomberg Philanthropies through grants to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and The Fund for Public Schools.

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