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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES BEGINS IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY ENRICHMENT CENTER EXPANSION BY RELEASING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) SEEKING NEW COMMUNITY-BASED PROVIDERS ROOTED IN COMMUNITIES TO RUN NEW CENTERS

FECs are Walk-in Centers Run by Local Community-Based Organizations and Co-Designed with Members of the Community so Families Have What They Need to Thrive

NEW YORK, NY – Today, as the next step in Mayor de Blasio and the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity's (TRIE) efforts to connect families in hard-hit neighborhoods to the resources and supports they need, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) released its RFP to expand the "Family Enrichment Center" (FEC) model from three sites to twelve sites in the coming year. Over the next three years, FECs will be expanded to a total of 30 sites. ACS is seeking local community-based providers, with deep ties to their communities, to run the new sites.

FECs, which were launched in 2017, are warm, home-like walk-in centers that are co-designed with local families and community members, so families and children can connect with neighbors, volunteer their time, and access resources and supports they need to thrive. These centers are administered by local community-based organizations. The new centers will be located in the hard-hit neighborhoods identified by the TRIE, based on their equity burdens and the impact of COVID-19.

The three existing FECs are located in East New York, Brooklyn, Highbridge in the Bronx and Hunts Point/Longwood in the Bronx, and run by Good Shepherd Services, Bridge Builders and Children's Village and Graham Windham, respectively. (Each center was named and co-designed by community members through a participatory process and are locally known as: The C.R.I.B. (Community Resources in Brooklyn), Circle of Dreams and O.U.R. Place (Organizing to be United and Resilient).

"Family Enrichment Centers are part of our ambitious vision to offer families a space to strengthen ties to other community members and to access important resources. This RFP provides us with the opportunity to identify community-based organizations, with deep ties to their own communities, to provide the services, supports and resources that community members identify as needs," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "We are proud of the fact that New York City is a national leader with regard to implementing programs like Family Enrichment Centers. Over the past few years, and most recently during the pandemic, the three existing Family Enrichment Centers have proved to be a vital lifeline for families in need. The RFP we are releasing builds upon this success and our deep commitment to addressing racial disproportionality in the child welfare system."

“The pandemic has had devastating impacts on communities of color and compounded long-standing disparities. Now more than ever, families need support and connections to resources that will help them thrive,” said **Sideya Sherman, Executive Director of the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity**. “Family Enrichment Centers put communities and families first. Local providers work hand-in-hand with families to co-design everything from the services that will be offered, to the look and feel of the space. We are grateful to see this innovative model expanded to reach the communities that need it the most.”

The FECs work hand-in-hand with community members to provide concrete resources and other offerings responsive to their needs and interests. Families and communities determine the activities, events and offerings of FECs. These offerings are designed to support families and increase community connectedness. By providing families and children the resources they need, ACS aims to ultimately reduce the risks of involvement with the child protection system. Examples of programs offered at the FECs include: movie nights (for families to meet in a safe space and allow children to make new friends); a therapist-led Healing Through the Arts offering for families recovering from community violence; cultural activities; and Café con Amiga (Coffee with Friends) facilitated by Spanish speaking parent leaders to provide support to parents and caregivers. In particular, the FECs proved crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing critical supports to families in need, including food, clothing, and technology, as well as social supports to parents and caregivers. The FECs provide a welcoming, safe, and accessible home-like environment that is open to all, where neighbors can connect, contribute to their community, find resources, support one another, and build protective factors that help their families thrive.

FECs look to parents and the community for guidance and leadership. The cornerstone of FEC leadership is Community Leaders, who help design and lead FEC offerings. Every FEC is required to engage Community Leaders as part of the model. Community Leaders are intended to represent the diversity of parents in the individual community and may include parents who have had lived experience with, and can provide guidance about, various public systems that participants may need to access, or in which they may be involved. They work closely with FEC staff and participate in training and technical assistance activities provided by ACS to build their skills, knowledge, and leadership.

A [recent evaluation of the FECs](#) showed that the Centers are having a positive impact on families. FEC members reported that the FECs were enhancing their social supports (from family, friends and neighbors), family functioning, emotional connection with their children, and outlook on life. Additionally, those surveyed reported significant increases in their access to advice and resources in addressing several life challenges, including parenting, financial issues, relationships, food and nutrition issues, and stress management. The report also said that FECs were having a positive effect on members’ access to concrete supports, which can help families better cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis.

As part of the RFP, the new FEC locations are below.

- **Queens:** Jamaica/Hollis/Queens Village, Rockaway/Broad Channel,
- **Brooklyn:** Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville
- **The Bronx:** Mott Haven/Melrose, Parkchester/Soundview
- **Manhattan:** Central Harlem, East Harlem

- **Staten Island:** Stapleton/St. George

To view the full RFP, [click here](#). Proposals for the RFP are due on November 17, 2021.

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