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## **MAYOR ADAMS ANNOUNCES NEW CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE**

*V-CRED Will Serve 90 Youth in Foster Care, Providing Professional Certifications, Paid Internships and Apprenticeships, and Trauma-Informed Wrap-Around Support Services*

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced a new vocational training and apprenticeship program that will provide professional opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care. The New York City Administration for Children’s Services’ (ACS) new V-CRED program will support youth in their education, career, and personal development, and is being created in partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The City University of New York (CUNY), and private sector employers. As part of the program, youth will participate in training for professional certification through courses offered by Kingsborough Community College, participate in paid internships/apprenticeships, and have opportunities for employment with the employer hosting the internship. V-CRED will focus 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.

“If we don’t educate, we incarcerate, which is why one of my most important jobs is advocating for our youth who have been in foster care or had contact with the juvenile justice system,” said **Mayor Adams**. “This new V-CRED vocational training and apprenticeship program is going to help our young people prepare for good jobs and a bright future. But it’s about more than learning. It’s about guidance and mentorship because when it comes to helping young people plan their future: We are not going to just let them wing it, we are going to take them under our wing.”

“When young people are given the tools and support they need to succeed, they succeed,” said **Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “V-CRED is the perfect example of a collaborative effort that does just this, by providing youth with vocational training, certifications, internships, and apprenticeships that will prepare them for successful careers.”

“ACS is committed to providing young people with the education and career opportunities they deserve, and this new V-CRED vocational training program is one important way we’re working

to do that,” said **ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. “We know that when we invest in opportunities for our young people, they work hard and seize them. By providing youth in foster care with access to professional certifications, paid internships, and employment opportunities — and keeping these opportunities in place beyond foster care into young adulthood — we are working to ensure they have the right support to pursue their dreams and be successful adults. ACS thanks the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, CUNY and the private sector employers who are involved in this program for their partnership and commitment to helping youth in foster care succeed.”

“VCRED offers all the components that youth need: Paid work experience, postsecondary access, and wraparound supports,” said **David Fischer, executive director, Mayor’s Office of Youth Employment**. “We are very pleased to support ACS on this highly promising program, and grateful for the generosity of the Kellogg Foundation in making it a reality.”

“The pandemic has wreaked havoc for many children and families, but especially for young people in the foster care system,” said **Nara Topp, program officer, W.K. Kellogg Foundation**. “We’re pleased to support ACS’s response to this crisis by collaborating with businesses, government, and higher education to provide vocational training and supportive wraparound services to young people in and aging out of foster care as a career pathway towards a more equitable future.”

“This great new partnership combines CUNY’s emphasis on health and medical technology with career pathways, and upskilling New Yorkers, all of which have taken on new importance in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “Our students from V-CRED will parlay the skills and training they obtain at Kingsborough Community College into careers that contribute to the revitalization and rebuilding of their communities, providing further affirmation that the road to New York City’s recovery goes through The City University of New York. We thank Mayor Adams, Commissioner Dannhauser, and the Kellogg Foundation for partnering with the university to create this remarkable initiative.”

“Increasing the accessibility of these training programs is pivotal in this time where there is a growing demand for talent. It is important for us to work towards closing the opportunity gap in New York City, which we know requires us to truly prepare students for careers that can help them to become more self-sufficient,” said **Dr. Simone Rodriguez, vice president of workforce development and continuing education and strategic partnerships, Kingsborough Community College, CUNY**. “We are delighted to partner with ACS to deliver specialized training to meet that demand.”

“We are excited to partner with ACS in providing a career path for men and women with great attitudes, and reliable and adaptable traits in a time where the construction industry is in need of craft professionals,” said **Kelly DiLello, training director, USIS Training Academy, Inc.**

V-CRED is one of multiple strategies that ACS is currently implementing to improve educational and employment outcomes for youth in foster care. Research has shown that the most effective programs for older youth in foster care are comprehensive services models that

include education, employment, housing, and supportive services. Youth in V-CRED will also benefit from services through the Fair Futures initiative, which provides dedicated coaches, tutors, and education, employment, and housing specialists for youth, ages 11 to 21, in foster care. Youth will also be able to enroll in a career readiness training through Hats and Ladders, an occupation education program designed to motivate and prepare young people for jobs.

V-CRED will begin as a two-year pilot program, serving 90 young people in foster care, 45 youth per year. The program has three core components, which include training for professional certification, paid internships, and job placement. The program is aligned with a career pathways model and provides developmentally appropriate career readiness planning designed to provide each person with a career and education plan, a resume, cover letter, and a professional network that they work to develop.

Paid internships are being provided by private sector employers and community-based agencies that will also offer tangible job opportunities at worksites where youth gain work experience and on-the-job training. The program also includes wrap-around services and participation in the Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers (YA WORC) program — a program offered in collaboration with Columbia University that includes a facilitated support group where youth can share their experiences during training with other youth, ask career questions, and get feedback from training professionals.

Partnerships for training in the industry-focused areas have been developed with Common Point Queens (Pre-HSE/HSE classes) and Kingsborough Community College (Pharmacy Tech and EMT classes) and Metro Placements to ensure youth have access to the specific industry training they desire.

The private sector employers (USIS, Health Max, Walgreens, CVS, etc.) will offer paid internships and apprenticeships to youth that can potentially lead to immediate employment.

“Finding employment, let alone a job that pays a decent living wage, can feel near impossible for young people in foster care. Through no fault of their own, this vulnerable youth group has been denied access and opportunity for professional and personal development, and it is our responsibility to mitigate that and help them secure the tools they need to achieve their dreams,” said **U.S. Representative Yvette Clarke**. “Our city’s new V-CRED program, spearheaded by Mayor Eric Adams, will do just that. Thanks to the dedication of ACS, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and many more passionate change-makers, young people in foster care will have greater access to life-changing training that will enable them to overcome the disadvantages that have held them back. For that, I am forever grateful.”

“The past two years have been incredibly tough, especially on our young people,” said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “As they look toward their futures, they deserve access to programs that will help them grow and develop the necessary tools for success. I applaud the new V-CRED program for providing youth currently in the foster care system with the opportunity to receive hands-on guidance in their education, career, and personal development. This program will prepare the leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow and allow them to garner the professional experience and skills that will continue to benefit them for years to come.”

“Only half of the high school students in foster care are on track to graduate high school in four years. We must do more to provide the support, stability, and opportunities these young people need to succeed,” said **U.S. Representative Nicole Malliotakis**. “The V-CRED program will provide them with professional, educational, and personal development to overcome the challenges they face and put them on a path of success. By investing in our youth’s future, we are setting them up to have life skills, good careers, and more fruitful lives.”

“Too often, youth raised in care experience difficulties in attaining self-sufficiency and financial stability,” said **New State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, chair, Committee on Social Services**. “Foster youth have earned this new opportunity to learn and grow while starting a new career pathway. Thanks to the partnering agencies and organizations for this critical new investment.”

“V-CRED is an innovative training program that manages to support both an expansion of the workforce and subsequent economic growth in New York state, as well as the needs of young people in the foster care system transitioning into full-time employment,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “Investing in our youth is investing in our future, and I’m looking forward to seeing the mayor’s program put into action.”

“Many children in our foster care system have proven themselves to be strong and resilient. These training programs will help them funnel that strength and energy into quality careers in high demand fields,” said **New York State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky**. “The V-CRED program will help create brighter futures for these young men and women, and a more competitive workforce within our city.”

“The city’s new V-CRED program will help our youth in foster care grow into successful, independent adults by providing them with the supports, tools, and training necessary for various occupations,” said **New York State Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi, chair, Children and Families Committee**. “Every child has the potential to succeed but not all are given the chance to do so. This new program is one way to further support these youth and I am grateful to Mayor Adams, ACS Commissioner Dannhauser, the W.K Kellogg Foundation, and CUNY for partnering on this initiative.”

“Every child deserves the chance to build a successful future, but we know the playing field isn’t even. Mayor Adams’ V-CRED program provides mentorship, certifications, paid internships, and wrap-around support services critical to the success of at-risk youth,” said **New York State Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**. “This program removes many of the barriers to career entry that are typically encountered by youth in the foster care system. I look forward to seeing its successes.”

“I commend Kingsborough Community College and the other partners in this initiative for making educational and vocational opportunities available to young people who may not have had the same support and advantages as many of their peers,” said **New York State Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz**. “Thank you to the mayor’s office for providing a pathway for youth in foster care to succeed.”

"As a former school social worker, I recognize the importance of providing paid training opportunities for students and young adults," said **New York State Assemblymembers Manny De Los Santos**. "This program will help put many New Yorkers on a path to have not just jobs but careers."

"As my office outlined in our recent report on education, youth in foster care face specific and unique challenges, and the city should do all we can to provide support and stability. Our report also detailed, and I have long advocated for, the benefits of youth jobs and employment education," said **New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams**. "This initiative will provide invaluable opportunities for career and personal development, and I hope to see it succeed and expand to meet the needs of thousands of youth in foster care across the city."

"It's imperative that our young people, especially youth in the foster care system, have robust access to the comprehensive supports of educational opportunities, job training, and career development services that are a pipeline to success," said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams**. "Investments in programs that provide career pathways and supportive services strengthen our communities and economy, serving as a smart approach to bolster the city's future and improve public safety."

"Providing internship opportunities that lead to actual jobs and careers can be life-changing for our city's youth, particularly for our youth in foster care," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** "Beginning with today's launch, I know this critically important effort to help them cultivate the life skills and career training they need to succeed will make a world of difference for so many young adults — and I'm thrilled that Commonpoint Queens, which does incredible work supporting families across 'The World's Borough,' is partnering in this program. All our young people, regardless of situation or ZIP code, deserve access to safe housing, workforce development programs, employment opportunities, and beyond, and today represents a solid step forward in that push."

"Young people who are in the foster care system may sometimes find themselves feeling like they are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing training and job opportunities," said **New York City Council Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, chair, Committee on General Welfare**. "This V-CRED program will create a pathway for these young people with the tools and skills that will set them up for success in the real world. I want to thank the administration for this initiative and to CUNY and private sector employers for investing in our city's young people."

"New career training is a game-changer for foster school parents and young people," said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph, chair, Committee on Education**. "I appreciate the leadership of Mayor Adams in advocating for foster youth and look forward to collaborating with him moving forward on this subject, and many others."

"Our city owes the young people in its care a path toward a successful adulthood. Our youth in foster care deserve access to career opportunities and mental health services that will prepare them for a fulfilling and healthy life," said **New York City Councilmember Shaun**

**Abreu.** “The mayor's new program will be life changing for the students who participate, and I am grateful to his administration for continuing to invest in foster youth.”

“The opportunity gap has never been more glaring in New York City, particularly for young people in the foster care system,” said **New York City Councilmember Selvena Brooks-Powers.** “Mayor Adams’ new vocational training and apprenticeship program will provide essential accessibility to bridge this divide, while helping young people create more prosperous futures. I commend Mayor Adams for his work on this issue.”

“The V-CRED program will be an important step in providing opportunities for our vulnerable youth in foster care to gain valuable job and life skills, and create meaningful professional relationships,” said **New York City Councilmember Kamillah Hanks.** “As chair of the Committee on Public Safety, I firmly believe that an early investment in our youth — particularly our young people in the foster care system that are facing hardships exacerbated by the pandemic — is a vital step toward preventing negative outcomes and I commend this administration for prioritizing this program.”

“Investing in our youth and providing them with opportunities makes all the difference to set them up for future success,” said **New York City Councilmember Kevin Riley.** “The V-CRED program takes steps in the right direction to uplift young people in the foster care system, not limited only to granting them fundamental education and training for the workforce, but also following through with paid internships and career avenues to support themselves. Continuing to expand on these initiatives will only contribute to the betterment of New York City, including our most marginalized and underserved communities. Thank you, ACS, W.K. Kellogg, CUNY, and all stakeholders, for encouraging more equitable professional and culturally competent development services to our youth.”

“I’m looking forward to the launch of the V-CRED program as it’s critical that we equip our youth with the tools they need to be successful in the workforce,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens.** “These collective spaces are critical for our young people in the ACS population, as we need to make sure every young person has equal access to these kinds of opportunities. It is even more critical that we consider how we can expand and properly serve our young people who also require these services.”

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