

Fall 2023 Update

# FY 2023-2024 Strategic Priorities



Oct 17, 2023

## ACS Perspective and Key Priorities

As part of Mayor Adams's vision, ACS is committed to helping build a New York City that is more safe, just and equitable for children and families. We will rely on the ideas, wisdom and assets of NYC communities and families.

We continue to confront the complex history of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and the disproportionate and often painful impact our systems have on underserved and overrepresented groups.

We envision a NYC where children and young people— including our newest New Yorkers—are safe and thriving and families are supported as their most important resources and protectors.

To this end, ACS has been carrying out the priority initiatives outlined here. We are pleased to be able to share these updates and will continue to listen to and update our stakeholders on our continued progress.

To my ACS colleagues and Provider Partners, this update is a testament to your tireless efforts. We celebrate you and appreciate all that you do on behalf of New York City's children, youth, and families.



Jess Dannhauser,  
Commissioner

## Support Community Investments for Families

### Increase access to subsidized child care

In July 2022, Mayor Adams unveiled [NYC's Blueprint for Child Care & Early Childhood Education](#) expanding access for families and support for providers.

- In March 2023, the City launched the "MyCity" portal, a one-stop shop for city services, including a streamlined child care assistance application. By August 2023, over 10,000 families applied for ACS vouchers through MyCity.
- As of September 2023, over 25,000 NYC children were enrolled in child care subsidized by an ACS-issued low-income voucher, up from fewer than 8,000 in June 2022. ▼
- ACS continues to target outreach to 17 high need community districts where poverty and unemployment are highest and child care supply is inadequate. As of September 2023, over 6,600 children from these community

districts were enrolled with a low-income voucher, a nearly 260% increase from June 2022. The City plans to reach up to 11,000 children by FY 2025.

- Last year ACS worked with four community-based organizations (CBOs) with deep experience serving NYC's immigrant communities to design and implement a child care subsidy program for undocumented children. The program, Promise NYC, launched in January 2023 and, by April, was serving over 600 children. ACS received \$16M in the FY24 budget to continue running Promise NYC.
- ACS continues to advocate for legislation that would allow for eligible parents to receive subsidized child care assistance beyond the hours parents are working or in school.
- **\*New\*** Due to NYC's advocacy, the NYS Office of Child and Family Services will increase income eligibility from 300% of the Federal Poverty Level to 85% of the State Median Income. These new income levels will go into effect on October 1, 2023.

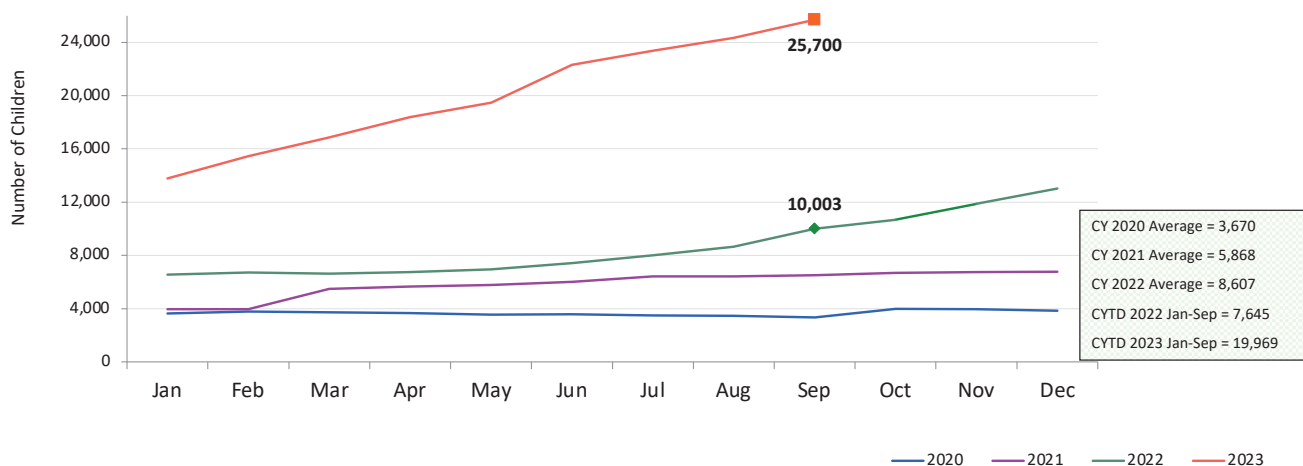
### Expand Family Enrichment Centers (FECs)

- In 2017 and 2018, with funding from ACS, three not-for-profit organizations opened FECs and in July 2022, ACS contracted for nine more, all of which are currently operating. In July 2023, ACS awarded contracts for eight additional FECs, and we are working with our contracted partners on recruiting and hiring, site selection, and community engagement. ACS is currently reviewing proposals for ten additional FECs, contracts for which are expected to be awarded in July 2024. By 2024, a total of 30 FECs will operate in priority neighborhoods identified by the Mayor's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity.

### Implement new School-based Early Support Programs

- ACS has re-envisioned the model for our programs formerly known as ACS Beacon Prevention to partner closely with schools to connect families to supports and services well before concerns warrant a call to the SCR. We incorporated robust public feedback

## Children Using ACS-issued low income Child Care Vouchers January 2020 – September 2023



into the RFP that was released in August for our “School-Based Early Support Programs.” Programs will begin in July 2024 and offer families flexible service options that strive to connect them to community resources, to address families’ concrete needs, support caregivers and avoid unnecessary investigations.

### **Permanent affordable housing and housing supports for long term housing stability:**

ACS has made substantial strides in working to secure stable housing for ACS involved youth and families:

- Over 100 eligible youth have received CityFHEPS vouchers; 42 have moved into permanent homes.
- 218 Emergency Housing Vouchers (Federal Section 8 vouchers) for youth aging out of foster care have been issued; 100 youth have moved into permanent housing.
- In the Fall of 2023, we are issuing 100 CityFHEPs vouchers to families engaged in prevention services to help them avoid shelter placement.

In addition, ACS has contracted with a non-profit service organization to provide housing navigation and stability to ACS-involved youth and families. Referrals for the services began in July and will expand throughout the fall.

### **Re-envision NYC’s Alternatives-to-Detention programs**

In March, ACS recommended awards for Alternatives-to-Detention (ATD) programs, which allow arrested youth, who are charged as juvenile delinquents, to remain at home with supervision and support while their Family Court case is pending. Three providers can serve up to 310 youth annually across the five boroughs with programs that seek to reduce recidivism, and promote positive behaviors, healthy relationships and problem-solving skills.

## **Keep Children Safe and Promote Family-Driven Solutions**

### **Create alternative pathways to support families by:**

- **Expanding our differential response track:** Through our alternative response—CARES (Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement and Support)—ACS is on track to refer 25% of incoming child protection cases to CARES by December 2023; we currently have a total of 61 CARES units and are expanding to 64 units citywide.
- **Expanding and strengthening referral pathways for family support.** ACS continues to strengthen referral linkages to community-based organizations. We are coordinating events that connect ACS prevention providers with DHS shelters to support families and reduce unnecessary SCR reports. ACS has launched a research project with the Public Policy Lab and NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) to increase direct referrals from H+H to supportive services. We are collaborating with NYC Public Schools to inform over 100,000 school-based personnel about how to access support.
- **Expanding A Safe Way Forward.** In 2023, ACS expanded this innovative model that serves intimate partner violence survivors and the persons causing harm from two to three programs. As of January, the program has the capacity to serve almost 200 families across Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island.

### **Continuously strengthen practices to protect children by:**

- **Expanding real-time review and coaching for highest-risk cases.** Our Accelerated Safety Analysis Protocol unit is expanding staffing to increase reviews from 200 to 300 each month.

- **Growing and supporting our continuous learning and improvement culture.**

- ACS is spotlighting the work of Safety Culture. Monthly orientations are open to all ACS and provider agency staff to introduce core principles. Local Action Teams, which test and implement Safety Culture practice strategies, are active within FCLS and DCP borough offices.
- In 2023, ACS is holding 33 ChildStat sessions, focusing four on CARES and another three on “Systems Support,” in which leaders across the agency address DCP needs in areas such as staffing, security and transportation.
- ACS has created a Citywide DCP CoQI Improvement Plan with several priorities underway, including supporting CPS teams in reviewing family history and better preparing CPS trainees as they transition to the borough offices.

- **\*New\* Supporting Families Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence.** ACS and ENDGBV (Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence) are reinstating a quarterly meeting to bolster relationships among service providers, including NYC’s Family Justice Centers (serving gender-based violence survivors with legal, economic and other supports) and to continue training child protective staff who work with families experiencing violence.

### **Reduce the stress investigations can cause.**

Across the city, ACS now offers families information about service providers and legal advocacy during the first child protective visit. In addition, ACS is launching a pilot to provide families information about their rights at the commencement of an investigation.

## **Increase community-based supports for families during child protection intervention by:**

- **Enhancing the role of Parent Advocates in Initial Child Safety conferences (ICSC).** In January 2023, ACS implemented an enhanced model of Parent Advocate participation in ICSC which now includes: standardized training, consent forms for parents, private family time during and additional support after the conference. In August, ACS hosted our first-ever retreat to celebrate and honor Parent Advocates. Over 70 Parent Advocates discussed topics such as community involvement in service co-design, parent advocate roles in family preservation, and self-care for parent advocates.
- **Supporting healthy early childhood development, maternal health and parent-child attachment.** Along with City partners including DOHMH and H+H, ACS is working to provide families with access to a range of services. DOHMH leaders presented their “New Family Home Visits Initiative” to DCP leadership so that CPS can connect new parents to services – such as Newborn Home Visiting, Nurse Family Partnership, the Doula Initiative – that focus on maternal mental health, chronic diseases and early childhood development.
- **Expand resources for fathers and other male caregivers.** With support from Casey Family Programs and in collaboration with male care-givers, ACS is exploring a series of initiatives aimed at better serving those engaged with ACS, including working with young fathers to explore parenting arrangements, and making our policies and practices more inclusive of fathers.

## **Prevent child injuries.**

ACS’s Office of Child Safety and Injury Prevention (OCSIP) promotes interventions that address fatal and severe unintentional injuries impacting young children, including unsafe sleep, and storage of harmful substances. With the legalization of cannabis in New York, OCSIP deepened its efforts to prevent unintentional consumption of edibles, partnering with stakeholders on information and lockbox distribution. OCSIP offers free resources, trainings and public campaigns to heighten awareness about how to keep children safe.

**\*NEW\* Identifying and Preventing Child Trafficking.** Over the past 18 months, ACS has trained over 1,200 staff to screen for possible involvement in child trafficking. ACS and provider agency staff will continue to be trained. ACS’ Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy offers technical support in screening and in using the ACS Child Trafficking Database.

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## **Provide Quality Care and Enduring Solutions**

**Partner with Foster Care Providers to use resources to advance respectful and effective practice with families that lead to timely permanency, safe stable placements for youth, quality care for children with complex needs and the success and well-being of youth.**

ACS’s new foster care contracts provide enhanced clinical and comprehensive case planning services to children, youth, and families. They are designed to provide robust permanency practice, including Family Time and Parent Advocates, and home-finding strategies. ACS has provided additional workforce enhancements and resources to implement evidence-based models in a variety of residential programs. Each foster care agency is funded to implement Fair Futures, which offers coaching

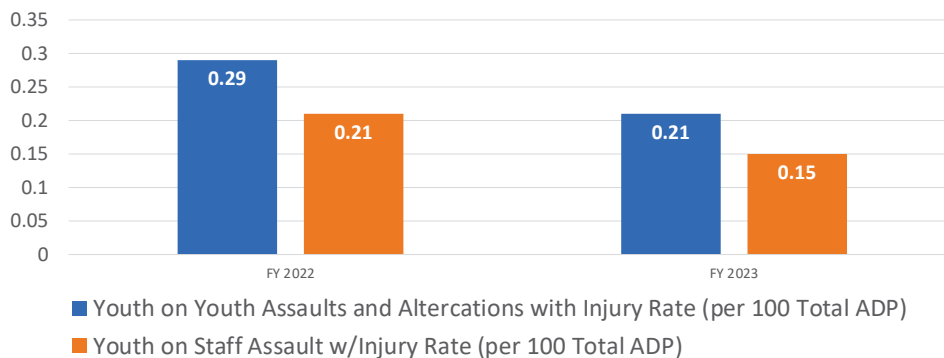
and other academic supports to youth from 11 to 26 years old who are in or have been in foster care.

**Trauma Training for All Foster Parents and Staff.** ACS partners with our contracted family foster care agencies to ensure that all foster parents and staff are getting trained in the Trauma-Responsive Informed Parenting Program. The “TRIPP” training is designed to increase capacity to care for and support youth with complex needs. As of fall 2023, ACS has trained at least two trainers at all agencies to provide the in-person curriculum to current and new foster parents. In addition, ACS offers webinars (in Spanish and English) to train agency staff.

**Reduce “pre-placement” stays at the Children’s Center.** While pre-placement plays a vital role in caring for children who enter foster care, those stays should be as short as possible. Finding kin remains a primary focus for ACS. In addition, foster care providers are recruiting, certifying and training non-kin foster parents willing to open their homes to children and youth, especially teens, those with therapeutic needs, and sibling groups. ACS and foster care providers are identifying appropriate placements through a comprehensive matching process to find the safest and soonest placements.

Transitions to our new foster care contracts have temporarily increased the census at the Children’s Center. To ensure appropriate care for young people, ACS is pursuing the above mentioned family-based strategies while also adding capacity for Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPS) and smaller residential programs.

## Incidents in Detention, FY 2022 and 2023



While the average daily population in detention increased 37% from FY 2022 to FY 2023, the rate of youth on youth assaults and altercations with injury fell 28% and the rate of youth on staff assaults with injury fell 29%.

collaborate to train staff supporting children and youth in foster care and at the Children's Center. Over the 2022-2023 school year, wait times for school transportation have reduced, enrollment in Summer Rising has increased and we have been able to provide more responsive assistance to individual children.

Most recently, ACS and

NYCPS issued guidance clarifying eligibility for school transportation, reimbursement for costs, and communication processes.

### Expand educational, internship, vocational, and employment initiatives for older youth.

ACS's College Choice Program supports young people who are or were in foster care to attend college and offer academic support. Over 300 youth are enrolled, and we aim to serve up to 350 by the end of 2024. In 2022, we also launched a new vocational training and apprenticeship program called V- CRED (Vocational training that emphasizes a Continuing Responsibility toward Education and Development) that is providing professional opportunities to 90 youth in foster care.

### Continue to improve safety, youth engagement and staff retention within secure juvenile detention.

Despite the fact that the population of detention rose significantly over the past year from an average daily population of 170 in FY22 to 233 in FY 23, violence in the facilities is on the decline: over the past year, youth on youth assaults with injury declined 28% and youth on staff assaults with injury declined 29%. We are continuing to offer retention incentives for frontline staff and are seeing some reduction in attrition and a net increase in available staffing. Our new leadership structures are improving facility management and responsiveness to youth, families and staff.

- For the last three years since Fair Futures launched, 8th graders in foster care are entering high schools with average graduation rates of 89%, well above the city average, and have achieved parity with their peers in terms of attending top quartile schools with average graduation rates of 96%.
- Of the 2,000 young people coached for 90+ days in FY23, 92% achieved at least three positive academic, career, and/or housing outcomes, such as reconnecting to high school, grade promotion, graduation; enrolling in college or vocational training; successfully engaging in a job or internship.

### Partner with NYCPS.

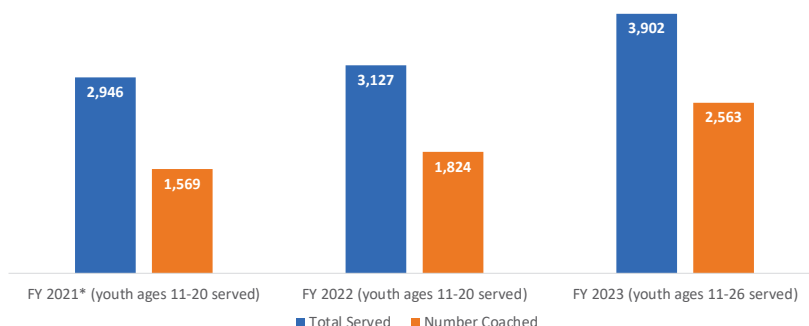
ACS and the NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) Foster Care Office

## Support the Success of Young People

**Expand Fair Futures.** In FY23, the City expanded ACS's Fair Futures budget to serve youth up to age 26 and those involved with or at risk of justice system involvement. ▶

- In FY 2021, Fair Futures served nearly 3,000 youth ages 11-20, 1,500 of whom were between the ages of 14-20 and were paired with a coach.
- Just two years later, in FY2023, Fair Futures was able to serve over 4,000 youth ages 11-26; 2,500 of whom were coached.

## Youth Served by Fair Futures, FY 2021 - FY 2023



\*In FY 2021 only youth ages 14-20 were paired with coaches.



## Re-procure the NYC juvenile placement system.

By July 1, 2024, new Close to Home contracts will increase the education, mental health, substance use, housing and workforce supports for youth.

## Supporting Provider Partners to help young people heal and benefit from therapeutic resources

- **Senior Advisor for Medicaid Services** - ACS's Senior Advisor is training staff to increase their awareness of the full continuum of services Medicaid offers so that more children, youth and families can access therapeutic resources. ACS's Senior Advisor is also working with the agencies to increase Health Home enrollment to access additional Medicaid Services.
- **\*New\* Enhanced collaboration with State Partners Offering Mental Health Services.**
  - ACS is advocating to OMH to ensure ACS and our provider staff are aware of available services for youth and how to access them. We are reviewing the data about referrals to and rejections from state run services to help us and our providers submit successful applications.
  - DOHMH and OMH facilitated trainings for ACS and provider staff on Children's Single Point of Access (CSPOA) — a centralized referral system for youth who need intensive mental health services to remain at home. ACS continues to advocate for transparent data sharing and better access to services.

## Child-Centric Social Security Benefits Initiative.

In July 2022, ACS updated our approach to using Social Security benefits of eligible foster youth to offset costs of care. We are now saving funds for eligible youth to access upon discharge from foster care or reaching adulthood. Since July 1, 2022, ACS has set up child-specific accounts for over 700 youth who are eligible for SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and/or RSDI (survivor benefits). Thus far, over \$2 million in benefits have been saved. ACS is also exploring the feasibility of saving benefits for young people beyond the federal maximum of \$2,000 per SSI beneficiary.

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## Ensure That First-Hand Experiences Guide Our Work

**Work with the Parent Advocacy Council.** Since 2019, the PAC has brought parents with lived experience into policy and practice by regular convenings with ACS leadership. In 2023, the PAC had over 50 meetings with ACS leadership. The PAC also coordinated three family-centered events in the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn that served over 1,100 people. Later this year, the PAC will host a winter holiday event for families in collaboration with provider agencies.

## Work with the Youth Leadership Council, Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board and other Youth Groups.

- **The ACS Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** continues to bring youth together to carry out its strategic plan, with a focus on identifying paid opportunities for youth at ACS. Two YLC members were hired by OCFS and ACS into full time positions. Additional YLC goals include ongoing recruitment

of new members, and developing training materials for agency staff on authentic youth engagement and youth-adult partnership.

- **The Fair Futures Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** is comprised of 17 young adults representing 14 foster care agencies and has led the advocacy for Fair Futures. It is currently focused on expanding access to quality housing options in desirable neighborhoods, improving housing voucher utilization and ensuring young people exiting foster care are fully informed about their rights, resources and options.

## Respond to recommendations from other youth and family advocates.

ACS remains actively engaged with "Narrowing the Front Door" (NtFD) Workgroup and other advocates who are promoting increased ACS transparency, support for families and a philosophical shift in child welfare. Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom and Commissioner Dannhauser meet regularly with the workgroup to discuss their recommendations.

## Engage with Provider partners.

ACS meets with our Provider partners to support their vital work, including a series of meetings with direct practice staff. In addition, ACS leadership meets with the Council on Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) to discuss system updates, as well as funding, budgets, and payment structures.

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## Reduce Unwarranted Involvement with Families, and the Overrepresentation of Black and Latinx Families and LGBTQAI+ Youth in our Systems

**Work with City and state agencies to improve training for mandated reporters.** In February 2023, OCFS

released a new training for mandated reporters that shifts the message from “when in doubt, call the SCR” to “you can support a family without having to report a family.”

- The training acknowledges the racial disproportionality of the child welfare system and emphasizes that poverty in and of itself is not maltreatment.
- ACS and other City agencies are promoting a citywide culture shift from reporting to supporting families with successful engagement, relationship-building and service referrals. We are co-designing trainings for staff who work with families that draw on the new state guidance and explain how to connect families directly to supportive services.
- 2023 highlights include: jointly training 400 Department of Homeless Services (DHS) employees and provider staff; jointly training over 4,500 NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) personnel, including Superintendents, Principals and nursing staff from Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH); trained DOE staff are presenting information to all school-based personnel.
- ACS is also exploring training collaborations with the Department of Youth and Community Development, charter school networks, and DOHMH Early Intervention staff.

### Defer appropriate late-night low-risk investigations for daytime follow-up

Since ACS began this work in the spring of 2022, Emergency Children’s Services has deferred an average of 8.5% of cases by June 2023. We continue to analyze the case trends and our practice to defer eligible cases to the daytime for in-person investigation.

### Reduce disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems through:

- **Continued implementation of the [ACS LGBTQAI+ Equity Action Plan](#).** ACS conducted our annual Youth Experience Survey, which includes five questions concerning sexual orientation and gender identity and expression that will help us assess the experiences of LGBTQAI+ youth in ACS care. Over 950 youth who completed the survey responded to the question regarding sexuality.
- **Continued implementation of the [ACS’s Race Equity Action Plan](#).** In July 2023, ACS updated our Race Equity Action Plan showing progress on the plan, including a significant reduction in our use of Court Ordered Supervision; the implementation of our redesigned prevention contracts, which expands therapeutic supports to families and we added Alternative to Detention (ATD) programs to ACS’s existing continuum, that already includes the Family Assessment Program (FAP) and the Juvenile Justice Initiative (JJI).



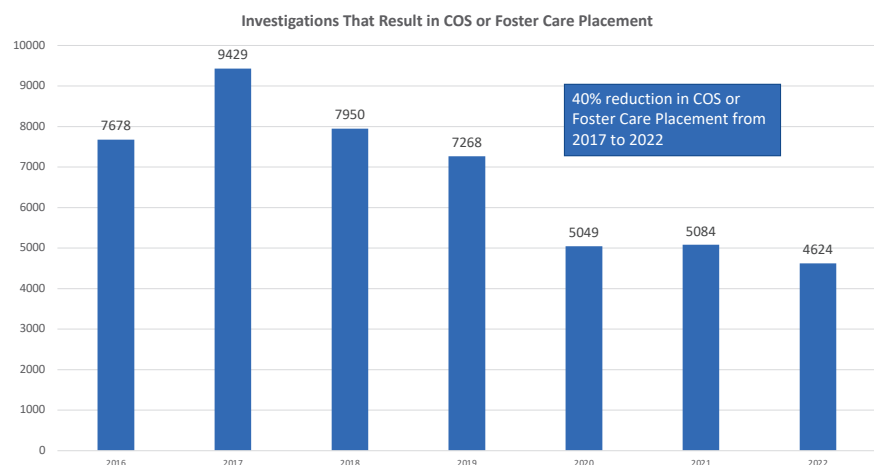
### Safely ending ACS involvement and combating the weaponization of the SCR.

- ACS and our foster care agencies continue to identify cases where court ordered supervision can end and/or families can be reunified.
- ACS is supporting a bill that would limit anonymous reports to the SCR.

### Invest in ACS and Provider Workforce

**Hire frontline staff ahead of attrition to keep workloads manageable.** Since the COVID-19 pandemic, ACS has struggled to retain frontline staff. ACS is focusing on maintaining adequate staffing for our most challenging positions -- in our DCP borough offices and our DYFJ detentions centers.

**Regularly solicit and act on staff recommendations.** In January 2023, ACS issued an all-staff Engagement Survey to which 41% of staff responded. The number one reason why responding staff continue to work at ACS is a passion for the mission of the agency. The majority also reported that they feel their work contributes to the overall





goals of ACS, they feel comfortable telling their supervisor when they make a mistake and they regularly receive clear communications from their supervisor. Some areas that need improvement are staff feeling recognized for their accomplishments and staff feeling that career advancement opportunities are available to them.

**Continue to recruit and retain excellent staff by advocating for workforce enhancements.** Last fall, the City allocated Human Service providers who did not receive state funded COLA increases to support Workforce enhancements. Over 90 organizations with 214 contracts with ACS received \$5.6 million of this funding. This summer, the City increased the Workforce Enhancement investment in human service providers by \$40M in FY24 and \$90M starting in FY25, which will be proportionally allocated to ACS contracted providers.

**Streamline processes so staff can spend more time directly engaging with children and families.** ACS staff are using guidance tips rather than proscriptive templates to document casework contacts and activities. In August 2023, the new process, known as the Engagement Assessment Documentation Guidance and Outline (EADG+O), launched citywide. We released an E-learn so that staff can now access training and support at any time.

We have also reduced case review responsibilities for Child Protective Managers by instituting a new high priority code (HP16) for frequently encountered families. The revised definition flags cases whose subjects have had four or more SCR referrals within the last 8 years. Since this change, the number of DCP cases involving frequently encountered families that CPMs must review has dropped by one-third (33%), from an average of 1,823 per month to 1,230 per month. ▶

## Provide workforce with the technology and tools to do their jobs safely and effectively:

- **Safety App for Providers:** Over 20 ACS contracted partners expressed interest in a smartphone application to help protect the safety of their staff working in the community. The application vendor began working with the providers, which includes introductory meetings and trainings, which we expect will be completed by the fall.
- **Career Long Learning:** This fall, ACS launched the Institute for Leadership Development (ILD), a new entity within the ACS Office of Training and Workforce Development, whose mission is to support ACS and provider agency staff leaders across NYC in establishing psychologically safe work environments that embrace equity, transparency and innovation to strengthen the workforce. The first three courses being offered are: Executive Coaching, Leading & Exploring Through Accountability & Development (LEAD), and Learning, Evolving, & Advancing Professionally (LEAP).
- **Scholarship Opportunities:** In addition, ACS will offer graduate school scholarships to Provider Agency staff starting in fall 2023 with 35 of 54 agencies participating. Participating agencies have identified

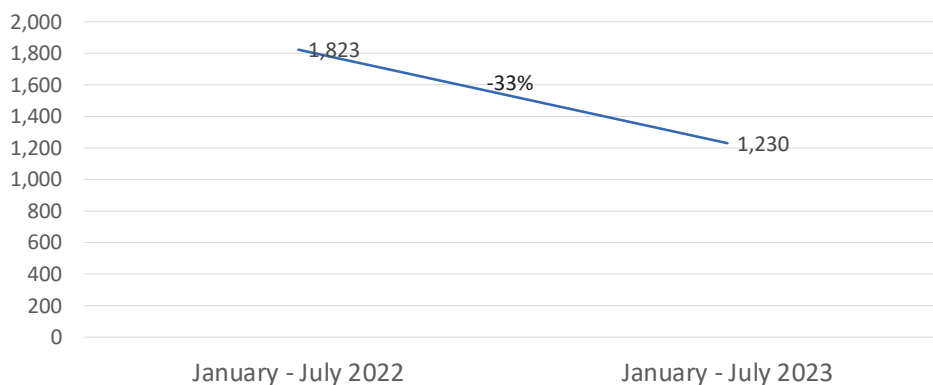
an agency liaison, each of whom has been trained to work with ACS to facilitate their agency staff applications. The Provider agency prospective student application process opened in July and over 30 eligible staff have applied.

## Strengthen Infrastructure

**Prepare for and Prevent Service Disruption.** To ensure that essential services are not impacted by natural disasters or cyber incidents, ACS is improving back-up of core IT capabilities, developing incident response plans and improving cybersecurity. To safeguard the privacy of the 150,000+ families we work with every year, we are undertaking several efforts, including ensuring the encryption of sensitive information protecting against advanced cybersecurity threats, securing mobile devices, continuously monitoring all IT systems and securing system administrator accounts. Additionally, we are rolling out guest Wi-Fi at all our locations.

**Prioritizing and Consolidating Information Technology Projects.** ACS developed an agency-wide governance framework to implement IT priorities. We have 16 active projects underway. In addition, we developed eight "Enterprise Solutions" to solve numerous needs across

## Reduction in CPM Case Review Workload, January – July 2022 and January – July 2023



the agency. For example, we are working to develop a comprehensive Prevention System to improve how ACS interfaces with Prevention Providers, expedites referrals for services and improves service coordination. In the Summer of 2023, ACS kicked off implementation of an Electronic Health Record system (EHR) for youth in our care to safely and digitally maintain health profiles.

### **Progress critical capital projects to create warm respectful spaces.**

In collaboration with DDC, ACS is modernizing our secure detention facilities to support programmatic and operational needs. Some updates include new classroom furniture; breakroom improvements for staff; exterior lighting improvements for safety purposes; we have fully integrated Detention Police under ACS Police in one uniform force. Additionally, we are working with DCAS to relocate and/or update some ACS sites to better support family engagement, security and technology.

- ACS is expected to move our agency headquarters to 110 William Street in December 2025. This new site is close to current headquarters and public transportation and will offer a more modern and technologically advanced space.
- Part of the Bronx North Borough Office will move to a newly renovated space at Bartow Avenue in Co-Op city at the beginning of 2024.
- ACS is also making improvements to the Children's Center and to additional DCP Borough Offices, including replacing the roof at 1200 Waters Place, replacing exterior lighting and doors, which also allows for better lighting in the entryway, and outfitting sites with new ACS signage and ACS-branded floor mats.

### **Improve key administrative processes to better serve staff so they may better serve children and families:**

- **Transportation Services:** ACS is improving our transportation services for frontline staff who serve families. We have added drivers and modified vehicle locations to improve responsiveness; we are providing access to real-time maps showing vehicle movements, driver contact information and a description of the vehicle. All drivers have taken customer service retraining and can access a translation app to enhance their ability to communicate.
- **Safety and Security:** ACS Police continues to hire and train new officers who are assigned to the Borough Offices. We have implemented enhanced safety measures such as hand wand searches and enhanced security features such as door buzzers and entryway cameras in locations with more frequent security concerns to improve the safety and security of ACS staff.
- **Repair, maintenance and construction projects:** The Division of Administration is upgrading our existing helpdesk system. We are piloting an electronic form submission and tracking process to create an easier, more straightforward process, and allows for real-time review of project status. Once we have incorporated any needed improvements, we will implement across the agency.

### **Strengthen language access services for limited-English proficient families:**

ACS's Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs (ISLA) facilitates services for limited English proficient children, youth and families. The office manages ACS's five language access contracts that provide telephonic, in-person interpretation, on-site, American Sign Language and written translation of documents;

- Over the past year, ISLA expanded its language certification program. Over 150 ACS staff across the agency are currently certified to do their work in a language other than English.
- Over the last year, ISLA offered 38 presentations promoting Language Access services to ACS staff, provider agency staff and stakeholders.
- In the summer of 2023, ISLA expanded onsite Spanish interpretation services to cover additional borough office locations and began offering Language Access services to ACS's foster care agency providers.
- Starting in August 2023, ISLA started supporting the interpretation services at the City's Asylum Application Center.
- We are translating the ACS website into Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin (Simplified Chinese), Haitian Creole, Russian and Spanish to better assist LEP families view ACS in their preferred language.
- We are developing an RFP to procure language access services directly, starting FY2025.

**We commit to continuing to listen, learn and evolve our work.**