



## **Limited Secure Placement White Paper**

**Issued for Public Comment - October 3, 2012**

### **Background and Guiding Principles**

In March 2012, Governor Cuomo signed the landmark “Close to Home” legislation, which authorizes New York City to provide a continuum of services for adjudicated delinquent youth and their families. This legislation represented a transformation of our State’s juvenile justice system, with the goal of improving outcomes for youth involved in the system, and thereby increasing community safety. To achieve these goals, New York City was given the opportunity to build a continuum of services, including City-based placement facilities, to meet the needs of adjudicated youth, provide better positive connections between youth and their communities, and assist families in developing tools to help youth continue on a successful path. Additionally, under Close to Home, school success would increase because all youth would attend and receive credits from City public schools, both during and after placement. Further, oversight of programs and facilities – by government, advocates, families, and communities – would be strengthened as a result of locating programs in the City.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Close to Home legislation, during the Summer of 2012 New York City submitted to the New York State Office of Children’s Services (“OCFS”) its plan for the implementation of the first phase of Close to Home programming in New York City. The plan was approved by OCFS, and September 1, 2012 was set as the launch date for the initiative.

### **The Launch of Close to Home in New York City**

Throughout the summer of 2012, Children’s Services developed its continuum of non-secure placement facilities. In total, 35 facilities, nearly all in New York City and ranging in size from sleeping 6 to twenty-four youth, will be developed by December 1, 2012. All are operated by non-profit organizations that have a long history of serving New York City youth and families.

On September 1, 2012, Children’s Services received its first two youth pursuant to the Close to Home legislation. The movement of youth from State non-secure placements into City-procured non-secure placements will continue through November 2012. From September 1, 2012, onward, all new non-secure placements of New York City youth by Family Court judges will be to Children’s Services.

### **Limited Secure Placement Development and Community Feedback**

The next phase of the Close to Home initiative – the development of limited secure placement facilities in New York City for adjudicated New York City youth – is set to begin. Children’s Services is issuing this

White Paper to solicit feedback to its initial plans for limited secure placement. Instructions for the provision of feedback are contained at the end of this White Paper.

### **Limited Secure Placement Guiding Principles**

The City's plan for limited secure placement will promote public safety; be data-driven; and be accountable to youth and their families, the courts, stakeholders, and the community. Limited secure placement will prioritize public safety by promoting family and community involvement; build on research-driven and evidence-informed practices; emphasize school achievement; ensure effective reintegration services, including aftercare services; and establish public safety protocols that will be utilized with all youth.

Children's Services' plan for limited secure placement will be the product of research, priority-setting, inter-agency discussions, provider proposals, and community input as to how the City's adjudicated delinquent youth and their families may best be served while the City continues to protect public safety. The guiding principles are that risk and need must be appropriately assessed, that youth need the support of their families and communities to succeed, and that building upon the strengths of court-involved youth and their families in a community-based setting improves outcomes and reduces recidivism.

### **Limited Secure Placement Procurement**

Children's Services will issue a Negotiated Acquisition Solicitation for the procurement of limited secure residential placement services in early 2013. Currently, ACS believes that there will be a need for 150 limited secure beds. These facilities will be located in New York City and will sleep between 12 and 30 youth. This solicitation will be issued to not-for-profit agencies that are currently licensed to provide residential services for adjudicated delinquent youth by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. These licensed not-for-profit agencies will directly operate limited secure placement.

### **Population Served**

The youth placed in limited secure facilities will be New York City youth, who have been adjudicated by New York City Family Court for having committed before the age of 16, an act that would constitute a crime had they been an adult. Youth residing in limited secure facilities can be between the ages of 7 to 21, though youth under the age of 11 are exceedingly rare. ACS anticipates the majority of youth residing in limited secure facilities will be between the ages of 14 and 18.

According to OCFS, in 2010 there were 259 placements of youth into limited secure – either by new admission, modification from another setting such as non-secure placement, or revocation/return from the community after a stay in limited secure. Eighty-three of these 259 youth were new admissions and 109 of these were modifications. More than 90% of newly admitted and modified youth in OCFS limited secure placement in 2010 had a demonstrated mental health or substance abuse need. Approximately 78% of newly admitted youth and 74% of modified youth to limited secure have a conduct or oppositional defiant disorder diagnosis. Approximately half of new admissions to OCFS limited secure placements in 2010 had a misdemeanor as their highest adjudicated charge; half had a felony as their highest adjudicated charge.

## Limited Secure Placement Goals

The goal of Close to Home is to improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system, and thereby increase community safety. Recidivism rates will be reduced when youth, whether they are in the community or in residential care, are able to take advantage of local programs and opportunities, and when families are given tools to participate in their youth's rehabilitation.

Similar to the non-secure placement continuum, the limited secure placement continuum will have the following goals:

- **Connection to Community:** Placed youth from New York City will stay in facilities in or close to the City, with opportunities to take advantage of local programs and services.
- **Safer Communities:** Moving youth closer to home will be the latest in a series of juvenile justice reform initiatives that have reduced recidivism rates, resulting in stronger and safer communities.
- **Better Family Engagement:** Rather than having to travel to distant facilities to visit their children, New York City families will be able to maintain frequent contact with their youth in care, and participate in their youth's rehabilitation, which will enhance the youth's likelihood of success upon release.
- **Improved Educational Outcomes:** Youth will attend and receive credits from New York City public schools or schools in which they can earn credits toward graduation.
- **Improved Oversight:** New York City juvenile justice programs will be regulated by staff members of the State Office of Children and Family Services dedicated to the oversight of the City's juvenile placement program, and monitored as well by ACS staff. The young people in care will also have the benefit of ready access to their attorneys who will be much closer and easier to consult with than under the current system.
- **Appropriate Public Safety Measures:** Public safety measures appropriate to youth in limited secure placement will be utilized in every facility and during aftercare.

## Program Approach

Children's Services is working to build a limited secure placement system based on national and local successful practices in juvenile justice residential settings. While promoting public safety and promoting opportunities for youth are not mutually exclusive, there is a balance that must be maintained in order to improve system outcomes for limited secure placed youth.

Core components of the limited secure program approach to be used in New York City include:

- **Evidence-Informed:** Foundation built on strong research and practice informed adolescent residential treatment models.
- **Therapeutic:** The program approach must be centered on highly targeted therapeutic and skill building group treatment.
- **Goal-Focused:** The program approach must have an established system where youth move through various stages in treatment, constantly working towards goals with the support of the other youth in the group.

- **Consistent Supervision of Youth:** Facility staff must always maintain supervision, which will include full sight supervision at most times (in cases where that is not feasible, such as where privacy of the youth is required, staff must be able to hear the youth).
- **Family Engagement:** Family engagement and service provision that involves families must be a core component of the program approach.

## Programmatic and Facility Specifications

Limited secure facilities will be largely self-contained sites where youth will reside and receive all regularly provided services. Sites must include sufficient indoor and outdoor space to enable the provision of all required services to youth. Services to be provided on-site include but are not limited to daily school; routine medical, dental and mental health services; recreation (including outdoor recreation); treatment team meetings; and family visiting. Youth will not be permitted to engage in activities off-site except under the constant supervision of staff or in other pre-approved settings. Consistent with upholding a commitment to public safety limited secure facilities will be required to have security measures in place as follows:

Facility Security	
Perimeter Fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 16' Fence</li> <li>• CCTV with Perimeter Lighting</li> <li>• Sally Port Entrances for Vehicles with Youth</li> <li>• Zone Fencing (permissible but not required)</li> </ul>	Youth Capacity Restriction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 to 30 Beds (*ACS encourages feedback on the facility capacity)</li> <li>• Facilities with 25 or more beds must divide therapeutic treatment groups into groups of 13 or less). Groups of less than 13 are preferred.)</li> </ul>
Staff to Youth Ratio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At minimum, 1 staff to 6 youth</li> <li>• A minimum of 2 staff on site at all times regardless of program size</li> </ul>	Youth Sleeping Quarters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Rooms Permissible</li> <li>• Dormitory Style Permissible (3 or more youth per room)</li> </ul>
Youth Room Door Locking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routinely Locked Individual Youth Room Doors</li> <li>• Exterior Building Doors Locked Inside/Outside</li> <li>• Interior Doors with Locking Capacity</li> </ul>	Doors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steel Hollow Core Fire Rated</li> <li>• Vision Panels on all Interior Doors</li> </ul>
Closed Circuit Television CCTV Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior Common Areas</li> <li>• Exterior</li> <li>• Recording to be maintained for a minimum of 90 days</li> </ul>	Windows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polycarbonate Laminated Safety Glass</li> <li>• OR Interior Shatter Proof Glass</li> <li>• OR Interior Metal Mesh Window Guards</li> </ul>
Suicide Resistant Design Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bedrooms (i.e. collapsible clothes hangers)</li> <li>• Bathrooms (i.e. collapsible shower fixtures)</li> </ul>	Facility Control Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24/7 Staffed Security Booth</li> <li>• Key Management Security System</li> <li>• CCTV and Optional Access Door Control</li> </ul>
Secure Entry Lobby	Health and Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient Space for Onsite Medical, Dental, Psychiatric, and Dental Services</li> </ul>

## **Feedback Regarding Children's Services' Initial Limited Secure Placement Plan**

Children's Services welcomes feedback on all topics and issues related to limited secure placement, including but not limited to the size, design, and location of limited secure facilities; meeting the needs of the youth who will be placed into limited secure facilities; family and community engagement; public safety measures; and oversight. ***Feedback may be emailed at [closetohome@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:closetohome@acs.nyc.gov), or may be provided verbally to Children's Services' representatives at The Children's Center – 492 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, New York, NY 10016 on October 17, 2012 from 9:15AM to 11:15AM. We ask that members of the public, who intend to provide verbal feedback, also provide a written summary of their comments at the meeting on October 17, 2012.***