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DSS COMMISSIONER MOLLY WASOW PARK ANNOUNCES KEY AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2025

This Year, The Department of Social Services Connected a Record Number of New Yorkers to Permanent Housing, Efficiently Delivered Public Benefits to More Households, Implemented Important New Policies and Programs, and Navigated a Challenging Social Services Environment

New York --Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Molly Wasow Park today highlighted several impressive agency accomplishments from the past year, demonstrating how both the Department of Homeless Services' (DSS-DHS) and the Human Resources Administration's (DSS-HRA) were able to advance critical priorities and better serve vulnerable New Yorkers in the face of significant challenges and uncertainty. DSS, as the city's primary anti-poverty agency, has focused heavily on ensuring that not only are all New Yorkers able to meet their basic needs, but that the pathways to stability and self-sufficiency are available to everyone. The agency continues to improve existing processes and procedures in order to make it easier and more convenient for New Yorkers to access vital services, apply for benefits, and move into a new, safe, and affordable home. The results speak for themselves: DSS's hard work is paying off for vulnerable New Yorkers.

“As we look back on all we have accomplished over the past year, it’s important to remember that none of this would be possible without the thousands of New Yorkers at DSS and our provider partners who dedicate their lives to the services of others,” said **DSS Commissioner Molly Wasow Park**. “Thanks to these remarkable efforts, DSS continues to raise the bar on the services we provide and navigate serious challenges while also setting new records for shelter exits, creating more deeply affordable housing through innovative programs, helping more New Yorkers get back to work, enhancing the city’s shelter system and more, all to ensure that New York City’s safety net is robust, compassionate, and effective. We will continue to build on this progress, prioritizing what works and exploring even more ways to help New Yorkers address any challenges they encounter.”

“At DHS, we are continuously working to raise the bar by ensuring our shelters not only meet essential basic needs but also respond to the individualized needs of those we serve. 2025 was a truly historic year for these efforts as we opened the nation’s first city-funded shelter for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, implemented new air conditioning requirements for shelters, continued expanding resources for New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and helped a record number of households exit shelter to safe, stable permanent housing,” said **DHS Administrator Joslyn Carter**. “I am so thankful to all the DHS and provider staff whose tireless efforts make these life-changing outcomes possible, and whose commitment to thoughtful, innovative practice continues to ensure we serve New Yorkers experiencing homelessness with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

“While 2025 was a year full of challenges and uncertainty, it was also a year of innovation and success thanks to the incredible work of HRA staff who guided both the agency and New Yorkers through changes to benefit eligibility and an historic government shutdown all while efficiently and effectively administering benefits to a record number of New Yorkers,” said **HRA Administrator Scott French**. “We’ve implemented new technology, increased hiring, and streamlined processes to expedite benefits processing and bolstered programs to help New Yorkers secure employment, remain housed, and achieve financial independence. We look forward to building on these results in the next year and continuing to advocate for the New Yorkers we serve.”

Notable accomplishments in 2025 include:

Record-Setting Connections to Permanent Housing (Again): As a result of the agency’s efforts to prioritize housing, streamline processes to expedite move outs, and even produce deeply affordable housing, DSS has once again helped a record number of households move out of shelter and into permanent housing. More than 37,500 shelter residents were able to move into a safe, affordable home with the help of rental assistance subsidies in FY25, a 28% increase year-over-year. Households are increasingly relying on CityFHEPS vouchers to obtain and maintain housing as other levels of government neglect to adequately fund critical rental assistance subsidies. DSS helped nearly 32,000 individuals obtain permanent homes or stay stably housed through CityFHEPS, reflecting a three-fold increase in the number of new households using the voucher since the launch of the program. More than 64,000 households are using CityFHEPS for their housing, reflecting a more than 200% growth in the program since its launch and making CityFHEPS the second largest rental subsidy program in the nation.

Connecting More Low-Income New Yorkers to Employment: A good-paying job is a key component to a stable, economically independent life, and DSS-HRA offers a wide array of career services programs to help low-income New Yorkers find and obtain a career that works for them. In FY25, the agency’s career services program continued to raise the bar, helping nearly 22,000 low-income New Yorkers obtain employment in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) an increase of over 170% compared to FY24 and the most since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, nearly 10,500 public benefits recipients were connected to employment through DSS-HRA’s BusinessLink HireNYC program, a 28% increase over the prior fiscal year and a new record for the program. While partially a result of the reinstatement of mandatory workforce development for Cash Assistance clients, the stark increase in job connections is indicative of the agency’s commitment to ensuring that pathways to good-paying jobs and self-sufficiency are available to all New Yorkers, regardless of circumstances, and DSS-HRA’s career services partners’ ability to efficiently and effectively serve more New Yorkers. DSS-HRA continues to expand opportunities for underserved communities through partnerships with experienced career services providers and new workforce development models like the recently launched Pathways for Access to Careers and Employment (PACE), an expanded iteration of the agency’s Career Pathways that prioritizes client-centered approaches, customized supports, sector-based training to connect clients to growing industries, and operational efficiencies to help resolve client issues as quickly as possible.

Bolstering Legal Supports for New Yorkers in Housing Court: Keeping New Yorkers in their homes is always the goal of DSS, and the agency has numerous prevention-based resources [available](#). This also includes the city's first-in-the-nation Right to Counsel program, overseen by DSS's Office of Community Justice (OCJ). OCJ continues its work to reform and improve this crucial program – placing greater emphasis on the provision of full legal representation, updating performance targets for legal service providers to better reflect the priorities of the program, and significantly increasing funding for tenant legal services so more New Yorkers can access the legal services to which they are entitled. As a result of these changes, a record number of households and individuals at risk of eviction obtained legal services through the Right to Counsel program in FY25. In total over 110,000 people across 51,000 households received legal services with a larger percentage receiving full legal representation. DSS's providers delivered full-legal representation to a record high of over 22,700 households and 52,500 individuals in eviction proceedings. OCJ continues to coordinate closely with its provider network to further improve and expand services while also addressing ongoing issues impacting the program.

Supporting New Yorkers Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness: Thanks to New York City's unique Right to Shelter and the dedicated work of DSS-DHS and the agency's not-for-profit outreach and shelter providers, NYC continues to have the lowest rate of unsheltered homelessness of any major city in the nation with only about 3% of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness living unsheltered. However, DSS-DHS continues to prioritize this especially vulnerable population, expanding critical resources like low-barrier beds, which are designed specifically to serve this population, and redoubling round-the-clock outreach efforts to engage hard to reach New Yorkers and connect them to services and shelter. While these efforts take time, requiring trust building at multiple touchpoints, DSS-DHS had made real progress through initiatives like the Subway Safety Plan, which, since its launch in February 2022, has helped connect over 9,000 individuals to shelter. More than 1,200 of these individuals are now residing in subsidized, permanent housing. In total, since the start of the administration, DSS-DHS has placed more than 4,000 New Yorkers who were living unsheltered into permanent housing from specialized low-barrier shelters. In the first ten months of 2025 alone, over 1,100 individuals were placed into housing from these facilities, nearly matching the total for 2024 and putting the agency on pace to surpass that number this year.

Opening the Nation's First City-Funded Shelter for Transgender Individuals: As transgender communities experienced sustained attacks on their rights this year, New York City reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening protections and supports for this community by [opening Ace's Place](#), a groundbreaking new shelter dedicated to serving transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) individuals experiencing homelessness. Operated by Destination Tomorrow, a national LGBTQ+ organization serving the community through educational, financial, housing, health and personal support programs, Ace's Place provides high-quality transitional housing and specialized support for TGNC clients, employing innovative approaches to support residents, including a culinary arts program. Destination Tomorrow provides comprehensive wraparound services, including mental health supports, in a trauma-informed setting while also facilitating vital connections to community-based resources. DSS continues to work closely with key community stakeholders to identify collaborative ways to better serve and support New York City's thriving LGBTQ+ community and ensure that NYC continues to stand as a beacon of safety, dignity, and empowerment for the TGNC community.

Creating a New Housing Unit to Strengthen and Streamline Housing Operations: Despite record-breaking success, DSS continues to implement reforms to make the agency's housing operations more efficient and effective. This includes [the creation of the Housing Services Administration \(HSA\)](#), a new housing unit that integrated housing experts from across the agency to streamline processes, centralize oversight, and bolster supports to get more New Yorkers into permanent homes as quickly as possible. The new unit will work closely with shelter providers and DSS staff in shelters to improve the delivery of targeted rehousing supports to clients. HSA will also support the expansion of the agency's groundbreaking Affordable Housing Services (AHS) program. In conjunction with the creation of HSA, the agency also expanded the Homelessness Prevention Administration (HPA) unit's portfolio to include the Office of Civil Justice, which oversees the city's Right to Counsel program as well as a new complex case unit to address especially complicated situations and improve outcomes for tenants.

Continuing to Expand DSS's Housing Footprint: New York City needs more housing, and it is incumbent on every city agency to use every tool available to expand the city's housing supply, especially the stock of deeply affordable housing. That's why DSS launched its [Affordable Housing Services \(AHS\) initiative](#) last year and why expanding it has been a top priority. This year saw the opening of several remarkable AHS projects including [2886 Atlantic Avenue](#), the first AHS site in Brooklyn opened in partnership with the Institute for Community Living (ICL), which created 182 deeply affordable homes for New Yorkers exiting the shelter system and the [Baisley Pond Park Residences](#), New York City's First-Ever Hotel-to-Affordable Housing conversion under the Housing Our Neighbors with Dignity Act (HONDA) which was also partially funded through AHS. The AHS initiative facilitated the creation of more than 190 units (of the 318 total units) for New Yorkers moving out of the shelter system using CityFHEPS. This project was developed by a broad array of public and private partners including New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC), the New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) as well as Slate Property Group and RiseBoro Community Partnership. Through AHS, RiseBoro will retain long-term non-profit ownership and management of the building and provide onsite support and wrap-around services for residents as they transition from homelessness to permanent affordable housing. DSS continues to prioritize the expansion of AHS which reached the significant milestone of more than 1,000 awarded or open units in 2025.

Enhancing Supports for Pregnant New Yorkers in Shelter to Break the Cycle of Homelessness: This year, DSS-DHS officially launched the [“Creating Real Impact at Birth” \(CRIB\) pilot program](#), an innovative DSS program that will connect and prioritize pregnant New Yorkers applying for shelter with housing vouchers to place them on a path toward permanent housing. In FY24, over 2,000 babies were born in New York City shelters; this pilot aims to identify the most effective way to reduce that number and ensure that new parents are able to raise their family in the comfort of their own stable home. Through this ongoing pilot, DSS is identifying more than 300 pregnant New Yorkers who are applying for shelter and assigning them to a housing subsidy that will allow them to more quickly move into stable homes before their children are born. Once eligible households have been identified, participants are immediately connected to a housing support path — either CityFHEPS or Pathway Home, a

program that enables families and individuals to quickly move out of shelter by moving in with friends or family members and provides monthly payments to host families. DSS will continue to closely monitor this pilot and assess the results to determine how to more effectively get new parents into a safe and stable home.

Improving the Shelter System with New Cooling Requirements: DSS-DHS remains focused on improving the city's shelter system and making shelters more comfortable and responsive to the needs of clients. To that end, DSS-DHS this year amended the traditional shelter site Request for Proposal (RFP) to require air conditioning in all new shelter facilities. As the agency continues to open new, high-quality shelter facilities while ceasing operations in sites that no longer meet DSS-DHS standards, this reform ensures that a larger proportion of city shelters will have comprehensive cooling capabilities. The health and safety of clients is always DSS-DHS' primary concern, and while the majority of existing shelter facilities have some cooling capabilities, this change will expand these capabilities across the system, something which is increasingly important as NYC summers become hotter and longer.

Helping New Yorkers Navigate the Federal Shutdown and New Requirements for Public Benefits: 2025 was a challenging year for administering benefits as the federal government implemented a slew of new eligibility requirements for essential public benefits like SNAP and Cash Assistance and attempted to limit access to even basic resources for vulnerable New Yorkers. Keeping New Yorkers apprised of these changes was a top priority throughout the year. From sending notices directly to clients to hosting informational sessions with community partners and highlighting these changes in the news, ensuring New Yorkers were aware of modifications to public benefit programs was top of mind. Nowhere was this more evident than in the agency's response to the federal shutdown which temporarily deprived New Yorkers of critical food benefits. DSS quickly moved to add \$15 million in emergency funding for the Community Food Connection Program to supplement the robust network of food pantries and soup kitchens funded by DSS-HRA while also keeping New Yorkers apprised of changes to the status of their benefits.

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About the New York City Department of Social Services: The Department of Social Services, comprised of the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), serves millions of New Yorkers annually through a broad range of services that aim to address poverty, income inequality, and prevent homelessness. HRA serves over three million New Yorkers through the administration of more than 15 major public assistance programs. DHS oversees a broad network of shelters, services, and outreach programs dedicated to helping New Yorkers experiencing homelessness get back on their feet. DSS is central to the City's mission to expand opportunity for more New Yorkers, address income inequality, help New Yorkers experiencing homelessness stabilize their lives, and ensure that vulnerable New Yorkers receive the benefits and assistance for which they may be eligible.