

FY 2024 Borough Budget Consultations

Manhattan - Administration for Children's Services

Meeting Date 9/_7_/2022

AGENDA ITEM 1: General Agency Funding Discussion

I. As Agencies continue to recover from the COVID 19 period to provide full services and relief funds from the Federal Government to states and municipalities begins to wind down:

1. What changes in federal funding have been instituted for FY 23? Will those changes continue into FY 24? What portion or percentage of the FY 22 and FY 23 budgets consisted of non-recurring federal funding?
2. What, if any, programs are affected by a change (decrease or increase) or end of COVID relief funds for FY 23?
3. What is the overall budget increase or decrease for FY 23 adopted budget compared to FY22 budget? Does the Agency anticipate a budget shortfall for FY 23, FY 24 or further out years after the non-recurring federal funding has been exhausted?
4. How will funding allocations be adjusted for impacts of inflation for fy 23 and what is planned for Fy24?

II. General Agency program funding.

1. What programs will see a significant increase or decrease in funding overall? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?
2. Which programs will be new or eliminated entirely?
3. Last year, the agencies response to this question was that it was overly broad considering the agency's scope. Therefore, specifically, What are your benchmarks for new and existing vaccinations programs for Monkeypox and for Covid boosters? What are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for Programs related to substance abuse harm reduction?
4. What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY24 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY25?

The agendas may include Boards' requests on district-specific budget questions. We request that the agency respond in writing, but have any further discussions on these items with the Community Boards outside of the consultation.

Please provide written responses or even a PowerPoint presentation that we can use to fully and accurately educate our Board Members.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

I. As Agencies continue to recover from the COVID 19 period to provide full services and relief funds from the Federal Government to states and municipalities begins to wind down:

- 1. What changes in federal funding have been instituted for FY 23? Will those changes continue into FY 24? What portion or percentage of the FY 22 and FY 23 budgets consisted of non-recurring federal funding?**
- 2. What, if any, programs are affected by a change (decrease or increase) or end of COVID relief funds for FY 23?**

ACS received \$4.9M in FY21, \$9.1M in FY 22, and \$9.1M in FY 23 in connection with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide financial assistance to non-profit human service partners to negate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Funds cover indirect costs for contracted human services providers and go toward costs necessary for provider operations. ACS anticipates that this funding will be in place through calendar year 2024.

In addition, the stimulus bills included funding to the state for child care. The state has allocated \$354M in pandemic funding to NYC to support child care subsidy expansion into FY 24. This includes increasing income eligibility from 200 to 300% of FPL and increasing the share of the market reimbursed from the 69th percentile to the 80th percentile. The allocation includes funds appropriated in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) as well as ARPA.

ACS is not anticipating any program changes (decrease or increase) as the result of COVID relief funds.

Foster care services are supported by a mix of federal, state, and city dollars. In regard to non-recurring Federal funding, which was primarily related to COVID-19 and the transition to the Family First Prevention Services Act, these sources made up less than 0.5% of the FY2022 total budget.

As further background: ACS was one of several jurisdictions around the country that participated in the federal Title IV-E waiver program that allowed ACS to reduce foster care caseloads, enabling caseworkers to provide more intensive, higher quality services and achieving more timely permanency for the children in their care. The federal law that allowed us to use these funds in non-traditional ways sunset in September 2019. ACS and NYC participated in successful advocacy that resulted in Congress passing the Family First Transition Act in December 2019. Among other provisions, the Transition Act provides temporary funding to waiver jurisdictions to bridge the time period to implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and avoid federal shortfalls. This was a 2-year bridge. To address the gap caused by the end of the waiver and the end of the transition funds, ACS's budget included \$54.9 million in city funds for FY2022 and \$120 million in FY23.

ACS is eager to fully leverage federal Child Care Block Grant funds—both existing funds and new federal investments—to enable many more families to receive federally funded child care assistance, and to implement Mayor Adam's newly released Child Care Blueprint.

In early July, the Adams administration issued a new Blueprint (<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/office-of-the-mayor/2022/Childcare-Plan.pdf>), which lays out the city's plans to expand equitable access to affordable, high quality child care across our system. The Blueprint includes common-sense initiatives for a quality system that supports families and child care providers.

It sets goals to:

1. **Increase access** to childcare assistance for thousands of children across New York City, including children in high need neighborhoods, children living in temporary housing, and children whose immigration status precludes them from receiving state and federally funded care.
2. **Make care more affordable by** reducing the amount families receiving subsidized care contribute toward their child care.
3. **Increase capacity** by creating more child care and early education seats by leveraging tax abatements and credits to facilitate additional capacity.
4. **Improve the process for** families by creating a single online child care application portal to make applying for child care easier for families.
5. **Enhance supports for the child care workforce** to reduce administrative burden, create more financial stability, and achieve higher quality care.
6. **Grow a highly qualified child care workforce by** widening access to provider career advancement and expanding opportunities for early childhood professionals to earn higher education credentials in partnership with CUNY's New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute.
7. **Leverage leadership from City Hall and the community by** establishing a new centralized Childcare and Early Childhood Education office and convening an advisory group to ensure we are working hand in hand with the community and child care providers who serve our families every day.

3. What is the overall budget increase or decrease for FY 23 adopted budget compared to FY22 budget? Does the Agency anticipate a budget shortfall for FY 23, FY 24 or further out years after the non-recurring federal funding has been exhausted?

ACS is responsible for the safety and well-being of New York City's children and their families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, primary prevention, and child care services. The agency's adopted budget for FY2023 is approximately \$2.77 billion overall, including \$1.041 billion in City Tax Levy (CTL) funding.

We do not project a budget shortfall due to non-recurring Federal funding.

We are in constant communication with OMB to identify resources as new needs arise so that we are able to meet our programming and service goals in the outyears, including State and Federal funding. This helps us both to meet our current programming and service goals, but also to institute new and innovative programs to address the needs of children and families.

4. How will funding allocations be adjusted for impacts of inflation for fy 23 and what is planned for Fy24?

ACS is continuously monitoring its budget, including the impact of inflation. At this time, ACS is reviewing its funding allocations and contracts for possible adjustments and will continue conversations with OMB as needed.

Please note however that ACS has implemented or is in the process of implementing several rate increases including:

- Increased market rate (and the percentile of reimbursement from the 69th percentile to the 80th percentile) for child care providers receiving child care vouchers.
- Increased Maximum State Aid Rate (MSAR) for foster care and residential providers.
- Increased the new EFFC foster care rate for foster parents to be in line with the State 5.4% rate increase.
- State COLA for foster care providers.
- Increased rate for foster parents, adoptive parents receiving adoption subsidy and kinship guardians.
- City non-profit enhancement for human service providers

II. General Agency program funding.

1. What programs will see a significant increase or decrease in funding overall? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?

2. Which programs will be new or eliminated entirely?

- Through **Child and Family Well-being**, ACS offers primary prevention support to families and children including child care vouchers and through our network of Family Enrichment Centers and Community Partnerships. ACS aims to proactively connect families with services, resources, and educational messages that can support healthy children, families, and communities, so that families have what they need to thrive and never reach the child welfare system. \$544 million is allocated in FY2023.
- In **Prevention Services**, ACS contracts with nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize at-risk families with prevention services that address common family challenges including family communication, homemaking, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, economic mobility, housing instability and more. Prevention services are free, available citywide, and reach more than 16,000 families with more than 35,000 children per year. \$368 million is allocated in FY2023.
- In **Family Permanency**, ACS contracts with non-profit organizations to provide foster care services. There are approximately 7,100 NYC children in foster care (compared with more than 50,000 NYC children in foster care 28 years ago, and 15,000 just a decade ago). For children who enter foster care, we have increased the proportion who are placed with “kin”—relatives, family friends, or other close adults—to more than 42%. The total foster care budget including adoption subsidies and foster care support and services is \$1 billion in FY2023
- **Juvenile Justice** administers services for youth and families including detention, residential placement, and intensive community-based programs. \$219 million is allocated in FY2023.

ACS's FY2023 Adopted Budget did not contain any cuts to our core programs and services. We are pleased to have received important new investments that will support children and families. Notable highlights include:

- Fair Futures: ACS now has \$30.7 million of funding baselined in our budget for Fair Futures. This initiative has provided coaches and tutors for over 3,000 youth in foster care ages 11-21. The increased funding enables us to expand the program to youth up to age 26, youth after they leave foster care and to youth at risk of entering, in and leaving the juvenile justice system.
- Foster care: We received \$120 million in city funds in FY 23 to replace the \$120 million loss in federal funds. At the federal level, foster care reimbursement is tied to whether or not a family would be eligible for AFDC in 1996—leading to fewer children being eligible for federal funds. ACS had a title IV-E waiver and then funds from the Family First Transition Act to address this but both of those ended. This funding addresses this decreasing federal reimbursement.
- Child Care for Undocumented Children: ACS received \$10 million in city funds in FY23 to support Child Care assistance for undocumented children.
- Child Care Vouchers: \$9.2M in Special Child Care Vouchers (SCCF) funding was restored in FY23 to maintain service for approximately 700 children.

In addition, due to increased funding in FY22, ACS is in the process of expanding from 3 to 30 Family Enrichment Centers over the next 3 years. ACS currently supports three Family Enrichment Centers (FEC) (2 in the Bronx and 1 in Brooklyn.) The new centers will be located in neighborhoods hit hardest by COVID. Contracts for the first 9 in the expansion have been awarded and include 2 in Manhattan, one in East Harlem and one in Central Harlem. We anticipate these new centers opening before the end of 2022.

The FECs are walk-in community centers that are co-designed with local families and community members with the goal of setting families up to thrive so that they have support and resources to weather challenges. Doing so, also reduces the risk of child welfare involvement. The FECs work hand-in-hand with community members to provide concrete resources and other offerings responsive to their needs and interests. In particular, the FECs proved crucial support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including food, clothing, and technology needs, as well as social supports to parents and caregivers

We do not project a budget shortfall due to non-recurring Federal funding and no programs were eliminated.

3. Last year, the agencies response to this question was that it was overly broad considering the agency's scope. Therefore, specifically, What are your benchmarks for new and existing vaccinations programs for Monkeypox and for Covid boosters? What are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for Programs related to substance abuse harm reduction?

The health and safety of our staff and the children, youth and families we serve is a top priority. Since COVID-19 vaccines became available, ACS has taken a number of steps to

promote both access to vaccines (and boosters) and then the vaccines and boosters themselves.

Initially, ACS lobbied for our essential, direct service staff to be included in the early waves of eligibility for vaccination. Since vaccines have been available, ACS has hosted both town halls with our Chief Medical Officer and vaccine clinics so that ACS staff and their family members could learn about vaccines and have ready access to vaccines and boosters shots. Over 97% of ACS staff are fully vaccinated.

The population of children in our care is fluid. When new children come into ACS custody, our nursing staff at the Children’s Center and detention screen children and youth for the need for vaccines, secure appropriate consents and vaccinate when needed. We are always seeking to assess the need for vaccinations and coordinate them when needed.

ACS has also been sharing information about monkeypox and the vaccine with staff and contracted providers as the information is officially released from the CDC and the NYCDOHMH. We do not monitor the vaccination rates because the eligibility criteria for this vaccine are very specific and we would not have the authority to obtain the information from our staff. The following are eligible to receive the monkeypox vaccine:

- People who have been identified by public health officials as a contact of someone with monkeypox
- People who may have been exposed to monkeypox, such as:
 - People who are aware that one of their sexual partners in the past two weeks has been diagnosed with monkeypox
 - People who had multiple sexual partners in the past two weeks in an area with known monkeypox cases.

With regard to substance abuse harm reduction, ACS has a number of programs and supports aimed at supporting children and families where substance misuse is having an impact on parenting.

ACS is a national leader in prevention with a robust continuum of high-quality services that strengthen families so that children can remain safely at home, including many that address substance misuse.

While all of our prevention programs can and do address substance misuse, ACS contracts with prevention services providers for 1,800 slots of the Family Treatment and Rehabilitation model, which is available to families in all parts of the city. The model focuses specifically on supporting families in which parents and/or adolescents have substance abuse challenges. This is an intensive model with frequent home-based caseworker visits and staff, including CASAC, with expertise in working with the substance use disorder (SUD) population. Some of the other prevention program models can also accommodate families with substance abuse concerns by providing case management to address the child welfare concerns with the family and provide referrals to substance abuse treatment.

The frontline child protection team also has access to CASACs (Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors), who are co-located in our borough offices, but who are not employed by ACS. These are experts certified by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse who do the following:

- Provide case-specific consultation with the frontline child protective team that may also involve direct contact with families. This service allows the CASAC to

offer expertise in assessment and family engagement as needed or when requested for complex questions.

- Provide continuous learning opportunities for frontline child protective teams:
 - CASACs model motivational interviewing and intervention strategies during consultations
 - They might participate as a coach during conferences
- Use motivational interviewing techniques and evidence-based tools and guidelines to conduct an assessment and intervention with a parent, offer education, and coordinate treatment referrals when needed.

CASACs do not make case decisions. ACS and/or our contracted provider agency staff make all case decisions.

4. What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY24 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY25?

ACS's mission is to promote the safety, permanency and well-being of New York City's children and young people, and we are pursuing a number of important initiatives related to this mission. 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 will neither ignore the complex history of the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, nor the disproportionate and often painful impact on underserved and over-represented groups. We acknowledge the need to disrupt complex systemic factors that can make it difficult for parents to care for their children in the way they want to. We envision a NYC where children are protected from abuse and neglect and families are supported as their most important protectors.

In Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, ACS will undertake the following priority initiatives that focus on supporting investments in communities and families; keeping children safe and promoting family-driven solutions; providing quality care and enduring solutions; supporting the success of young people; allowing ACS decisions to be guided by those with first-hand lived experiences; reducing unwarranted involvement with families; strengthening infrastructure; and investing in ACS and provider front-line staff.

Some of the key initiatives to do this are:

FEC Expansion: As mentioned above, ACS is expanding from 3 to 30 FECs over the next three years. The FECs partner community members to co-design spaces and offerings responsive to their needs and interests, providing resources and supports to enhance child and family well-being. By proactively addressing family needs that are identified by communities themselves we can provide families and children what they need to thrive and weather life's challenges. By strengthening families' protective factors, we can reduce the risk of child welfare involvement. We have announced the first 9 new FECs and will be issuing an RFP for the next 9.

Child Care Assistance Expansion: Along with Mayor Adams, we are taking important steps to expand access to child care:

- Since March, we have been contacting the families of all 35,000 children on the voucher waitlist to determine whether they still have a need for child care and whether

they are eligible. ACS will be offering all the eligible children a voucher. We anticipate this will be completed by the fall.

- We have increased the subsidy to families by reducing the family share, which is required by federal law, to the lowest legally allowable.
- The City advocated to the state to increase the income eligibility for subsidized child care. As a result, the state amended the law to increase eligibility from 200% to 300% State Income Standard, which was effective August 1, 2022.
- ACS is targeting 17 high-needs community districts for low-income child care assistance. These districts all have low household income, high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, and limited child care options. Manhattan districts include Central Harlem (CD10), East Harlem (CD11) and Washington Heights/Inwood (CD12).

Supporting youth:

- ACS has been strengthening the foster care system and implementing changes to make sure more and more doors of opportunity are open for youth in foster care, including through the implementation of “Fair Futures.” “Fair Futures” is a groundbreaking, first of its kind public-private partnership, that provides dedicated coaches, tutors and education, employment and housing specialists for youth with foster care involvement ages 11 to 26. Through Fair Futures, we support young people in the achievement of key milestones that put them on a path to success after they leave foster care to permanency or independent living. When it first launched in 2019, it provided thousands of youth ages 11 to 21 in foster care with coaches. The Adams administration recently provided additional resources to ACS so that we can expand the program to youth ages 21 to 26 and to youth in our juvenile justice programs. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. The expansion of Fair Futures from ending at age 21, to go up to age 26, will enable youth leaving care to maintain the critical support of their coach through the challenging transitions that come with leaving care and becoming adults. This expansion, which is just beginning this month, is a key part of ACS’s plan to help youth transition out of foster care.
- VCRED: ACS now offers a new vocational training and apprenticeship program that provides professional opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care. The new V-CRED program will support youth in their education, career, and personal development, and was 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 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 focuses 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.

Renovating Secure Detention to Promote Youth-Centric Care: The Executive Budget adds \$8 million to ACS’s capital budget, for a total of \$344 million committed to renovations at Horizon and Crossroads which will provide the essential and comprehensive upgrades that both of our detention facilities require to become safe, state of the art facilities for youth. This work will include critical infrastructure upgrades to HVAC, electric, and safety and security systems, as well as food service upgrades. Importantly, we will expand programming, vocational,

education, medical, mental health, and family visiting spaces, all of which will help us better meet the needs of youth, including the older population of youth we are now serving since Raise the Age.

Promoting More Equitable Outcomes: ACS has intensified our focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for children and families by taking a close look at internal policies and practices, as well as advocating for external changes that will reduce disparities in the child welfare system. Examples of continuing priorities in this area include:

- Ensuring that the voices of parents and children with lived experience are at the forefront of our decision-making, including in prevention services, foster care, and the initial child safety conference.
- Expanding our alternative track response to reports of child abuse and maltreatment to the SCR with CARES- Collaboration Assessment Response Engagement and Support allows specially trained CPS to apply a less intrusive and family-led approach to low and moderate risk child welfare concerns. CARES help to address effects of racial disproportionality by affording families the ability to receive services without an investigation determination. There is no record of indication or substantiated allegations. In 2021, ACS doubled the number of CARES units from 16 to 32 and we plan to add an additional 16 units this year and another 16 units next year, for a total of 64 CARES units by the end of 2023. There was an 82% increase in use of CARES from FY21 to FY22.
- Continuing our internal work, led by ACS’s Office of Equity Strategies to build staff capacity, knowledge, and skills to transform ACS into an anti-racist organization.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

AGENDA ITEM 2: Overview of Funding in the FY 2023 Budget

Please provide a general overview of the funding provided to ACS in the FY 2023 Adopted Budget, including funding items that were

- Increased or enhanced; and
- Cut or diminished;

relative to the equivalent funding for FY 2022. Please include whether any such cuts are a part of the elimination of a program or the transfer of a program or program segment from one agency to another.

Please include projections for the restoration or further cuts to these programs or line items in the projected FY 2024 budget.

Please include the extent to which any of the following affects the ACS FY 2023 budget or projected FY 2024 budget:

- Reported increase of 1 U/A (unit of appropriation) for Committee on Special Education placements.
- \$30M increase for the New Family Home Visits Program.
- \$46M contract enhancements for special education services for Pre-K and Day Care services (including whether such enhancements will achieve pay parity across all Pre-K and Day Care employees serving special needs and general populations).
- \$10M increase in funding for childcare opportunities for undocumented families. \$9.2M for low income child care vouchers.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

ACS is responsible for the safety and well-being of New York City’s children and their families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, community and family well-being, and child care services. The agency’s adopted budget for FY2023 is approximately \$2.77 billion overall, including \$1.041 billion in City Tax Levy (CTL) funding.

- Through **Child and Family Well-being**, ACS offers primary prevention support to families and children including child care vouchers and through our network of Family Enrichment Centers and Community Partnerships. ACS aims to proactively connect families with services, resources, and educational messages that can support healthy children, families, and communities, so that families have what they need to thrive and never reach the child welfare system. \$544 million is allocated in FY2023.
- In **Prevention Services**, ACS contracts with nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize at-risk families with prevention services that address common family challenges including family communication, homemaking, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, economic mobility, housing instability and more. Prevention services are free, available citywide, and reach more than 16,000 families with more than 35,000 children per year. \$368 million is allocated in FY2023.
- In **Family Permanency**, ACS contracts with non-profit organizations to provide foster care services. There are approximately 7,100 NYC children in foster care (compared with more than 50,000 NYC children in foster care 28 years ago, and 15,000 just a decade ago). For children who enter foster care, we have increased the proportion who are placed with “kin”—relatives, family friends, or other close adults—to more than 42%. The total foster care budget including adoption subsidies and foster care support and services is \$1 billion in FY2023.
- **Juvenile Justice** administers services for youth and families including detention, residential placement, and intensive community-based programs. \$219 million is allocated in FY2023.

ACS’s FY2023 Adopted Budget did not contain any cuts to our core programs and services. We are pleased to have received important new investments that will support children and families. Notable highlights include:

- Fair Futures: ACS now has \$30.7 million of funding baselined in our budget for Fair Futures. This initiative has provided coaches and tutors for over 3,000 youth in foster care ages 11-21. The increased funding enables us to expand the program to youth up to age 26, youth after they leave foster care and to youth in and leaving the juvenile justice system.
- Foster care: We received \$120 million in city funds in FY 23 to replace the \$120 million loss in federal funds. At the federal level, foster care reimbursement is tied to whether or not a family would be eligible for AFDC in 1996—leading to fewer children being eligible for federal funds. ACS had a title IV-E waiver and then funds from the Family First Transition Act to address this but both of those ended. This funding addresses this decreasing federal reimbursement.
- Child Care for Undocumented Children: ACS received \$10 million in city funds in FY23 to support Child Care Assistance for undocumented children.
- Child Care Vouchers: \$9.2M in Special Child Care Vouchers (SCCF) funding was restored in FY23 to support continued care for approximately 700 children.

While ACS did not have any reductions to any core programs, the FY2023 budget reflects the following efficiencies:

- **Close to Home Bed Reduction**- When Raise the Age was first being implemented, ACS and MOCJ projected an increased need for Close to Home (C2H) capacity. As a result, ACS added beds to some of our existing C2H contracts. We have seen that the implementation of Raise the Age has actually led to fewer youth in C2H and that we had more capacity than was needed and the budget reduced capacity from 301 beds to 289 beds. (The current census of Close to Home is 55 youth.)
- **ACS Overtime Reduction** – The \$8.6M baselined overtime reduction recognizes an additional reduction in overtime expenditures through improvements in scheduling, internal controls, and an agency-wide emphasis on work-life balance.
- **Vacancy Sweep OMB Target** - 227 headcount PEG Plan to right size budgeted headcount by reducing vacancies. (Frontline titles were not eliminated)
- **Foster Care RFP:** Savings due to census reductions and reduced reliance on residential care due to investments in the Foster care RFP. Due to anticipated continued reductions in the number of children coming into foster care, as well as anticipated shorter lengths of stay and the reduced use of congregate care, ACS is projecting foster care savings. By adhering to new federal and state restrictions on the use of residential care under the Family First Prevention Services Act, and through our continuing efforts to reduce lengths of stay in care and implementing the new RFP, we project savings of \$23.9 million CTL (\$34 million gross) in 5 years and \$800,000 CTL (\$1.1 million gross) in CFY23. There are currently fewer than 7,200 children in foster care.
- In FY24, ACS will have a new Unit of Appropriation to separate funding for Committee for Special Education. The Administration for Children Services (ACS) is responsible for the care and maintenance costs of the Department of Education’s (DOE) Committee on Special

Education (CSE) population, and DOE pays for tuition costs. The CSE oversees services to New York City school age children who cannot be served in local schools and are in need of residential care. These children are in the custody of the biological parents. The children are placed by DOE at various facilities nationwide; most of the schools are within the Northeast.

Note: The following items noted above are not in ACS's budget: \$30M increase for the New Family Home Visits Program.

- \$46M contract enhancements for special education services for Pre-K and Day Care services (including whether such enhancements will achieve pay parity across all Pre-K and Day Care employees serving special needs and general populations).

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

AGENDA ITEM 3: Child Protective Service Specialists' Average Caseloads

Please update us on the average caseload for child protective service specialists during FY 2022 and projected for FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Please include in this discussion:

- a description of the factors affecting the average caseload variations over FYs 2022-23-24, including the effects of the Pandemic, remote-vs-in-person school, and funding available in each year.
- ACS's goals or target for average caseload for child protective service specialists in each of FY 2022, FY 2023 and projected FY 2024.

Is additional funding needed to meet ACS's targets for average case load?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

In June 2022, the average child protective caseload was 9.8 citywide, and 8.4 for Manhattan. This is an increase from last June 2021 when the citywide average was 7.5.

ACS child protective caseloads remain well below our target of 12. Caseloads for ACS CPS are also well below the New York State recommended caseload of no more than 15 active cases, as well as the national Child Welfare League of America recommendation of no more than 12.

At the start of the pandemic, there was a dramatic decline in reports of child abuse and/or maltreatment that were referred to ACS to investigate. Much of this was due to many families sheltering at home and the lack of in-person school, child care and other activities. With the return

of in-person activities, we are starting to see reports (and caseloads/workload) begin to return to pre-pandemic levels.

ACS does not need additional funding to meet our caseload targets. ACS is currently funded to hire to address attrition and we continue to hire new CPS classes to maintain staffing levels.

ACS hires Child Protective Specialists (CPS) based on need, and we currently have a strong staffing position thanks to our successful hiring and retention strategies. We recently onboarded two classes of new CPS in February and May 2022. We are working to onboard our next class of 125 new CPS in August 2022. We continue to assess future CPS hiring needs.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 4: Child Protective Services and Other Investigations

Published reports indicated that the standard of evidence required to indicate or initiate an ACS investigation changed from “some credible evidence” to “preponderance of the evidence.”

With respect to this change, please indicate:

- The types of investigations to which this new standard of evidence applies.
- The basis or rationale for the change, including the extent to which funding or budgetary factors were a component of the decision to change the standard.
- The anticipated impact of the change on the ability of ACS to meet its goals and objectives for child protective services in FY 2023 and FY 2024.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Effective January 2022, the New York State law changed to increase the standard of evidence to indicate a child welfare investigation from “some credible evidence” to a “fair preponderance of the evidence.” This higher standard is in line with the standards used in most states in the country.

Then new standard of evidence applies to all ACS investigations (and all CPS investigations throughout the state of New York.)

The state legislature, advocates, legal organizations and ACS advocated for this new standard because we believed that it would bring more equity to the child welfare system. It brings New York's standard of evidence to be more in line with the rest of the country and will reduce the number of parents with indicated cases in instances where there is not a preponderance of evidence that there has been abuse or maltreatment. This will help many families, where there is no risk to children, by preventing parents from begin subjected to the collateral consequences of having an indicated case—including the ability to obtain employment.

There is no budgetary impact to the new standard. The number of investigations has not changed—it is just the percentage of investigations that end up with an indication that is beginning to change.

ACS strongly supported this change. We believe it will bring more equity to the child welfare system, which has disproportionately impacted Black and Hispanic families. We see the law change as a key part of our efforts to address racial equity.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 5: CARES

Please discuss the Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement and Support (CARES) program in FY 2022 just concluded, and projected for FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Please include in the discussion:

- An overview of the goals for CARES, including the extent to which ACS seeks to divert potentially more severe CPS actions or investigations;
- Any summary data that reflects the achievement or work needed to achieve the goals for CARES;
- A summary of the funding allocated to CARES, and any anticipated needs for additional funding in FY 2023 and projected FY 2024 to meet the goals for the CARES program.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

ACS is required by law to respond to every allegation of child abuse or maltreatment that is referred to the agency by the state SCR. Child Protective Specialists at ACS gather facts, assess child safety, and work with families to find out what they may need to keep children safe. Child protective investigations last up to 60 days and, at the end of the investigation, a determination is made of whether the report is “indicated” (currently based on the standard of “a fair preponderance of the evidence.”) Throughout the investigation, ACS helps provide families with what they need to keep children safe at home, including referrals for prevention services that are tailored to what the family may need, such as counseling, drug treatment, mental health services, and concrete supports to meet housing, child care, or other basic needs. If there are concerns of immediate danger to a child’s life or health that required temporary out of home placement, ACS works with families to locate kinship resources that allow children to be cared for by relatives and close family friends to reduce trauma. ACS has kinship specialist in each borough office that assist CPS with locating kinship resources when there is a need for out of home placement.

CARES is NYC’s version of differential response, a non-investigative child protection response to reports referred to the ACS Division of Child Protection by SCR. CARES is an alternative child welfare response that is available for reports in which there is no immediate or impending danger to children and where there are no allegations of child abuse. When these reports are assigned to ACS from the SCR, our Division of Child Protection Applications Specialists may refer the case to the CARES track. With CARES, there is no traditional investigation, no court involvement and there is no determination of whether maltreatment occurred. In CARES, specially trained child protective staff partner with the family to identify their needs, educate the family, empower the family to make decisions that address their needs and the needs of their children, and connect families to appropriate services. The CARES approach is family-centered, family-led, and solution-focused.

New York City launched the program in 2013, and has been steadily expanding it since 2018. In 2021, ACS doubled the number of CARES units from 16 to 32 and we plan to add an additional 16 units this year and another 16 units next year, for a total of 64 CARES units by the end of 2023. There was an 82% increase in use of CARES from FY21 to FY22.

To expand CARES, ACS converts existing child protective units to CARES units and provides those staff with training. Given that these are existing units, there is no additional funding or particular child protection budget for CARES. ACS currently has sufficient funding to continue our plans to have 64 CARES units by the end of 2023. We continuously assess this and discuss with OMB when needed.

MEETING NOTES:**NEW INFORMATION:****FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:**

AGENDA ITEM 6: Foster Care

Please update us on the implementation of the FY 2019-2023 Foster Care Blueprint, including its goals for enhanced delivery of service, reducing the total number of children in Foster Care, reducing the average duration of a Foster Care placement, increasing kinship placements and guardianships, increasing the foster care network, and expanding services for children about to age-out of Foster Care.

In particular:

- In previous years, ACS reported a trend of increasing preventive services and decreasing the need for Foster Care placements. Please provide a summary of results for FY 2022 just concluded and anticipated FY 2023 and FY 2024 for this trend.
- Please outline the budget impact in FY 2022 just concluded and anticipated for FY 2023 and FY 2024 of the implementation of the Blueprint, including:
 - key allocations for new or expanded programming,
 - any cuts to service or programming attributable to funding changes or cuts, and
 - overall Agency savings or efficiency promoted by these programs.
- Please summarize the funding allocated to providing mental health services specifically targeted to Foster Care placements (including children and, to the extent offered, foster parents), including:
 - the number of positions or service providers engaged in offering such services,
 - the funding in FY 2022 – 2023 – 2024 for such services,
 - the numbers of individuals reached, and the prospects for continuing the programs, and
 - whether the funding in FY 2023 and projected FY 2024 is adequate to meet the program goals and anticipated needs.
- Please summarize the budget, efficiency and progress-toward-goals impact of the Inter-Agency Foster Care Task Force, including:
 - any funding implications for ACS programming,
 - any funding needs for its operations in FY 2023 or projected FY 2024, and
 - an overview of whether the Task Force is anticipated to be continued in FY 2024 and beyond.
- In previous years, ACS described confronting issues of pay parity among various service providers for Foster Care services.
 - Has the pay parity issue been resolved following the FY 2021 funding changes?
 - What funding would be required to eliminate the core issue of pay parity for FY 2024?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

In previous years, ACS reported a trend of increasing preventive services and decreasing the need for Foster Care placements. Please provide a summary of results for FY 2022 just concluded and anticipated FY 2023 and FY 2024 for this trend.

Through ACS's strong prevention efforts there are **fewer than 7,200 NYC children in foster care** (compared with more than 50,000 NYC children in foster care 28 years ago, 15,000 just a decade ago, and 8,000 just a year ago). Our goal is always to help support and strengthen families to keep children safe at home whenever possible.

ACS's Prevention Services continue to be a strong and effective support for families. Services are free to all families and are accessible in all five boroughs. The goal of prevention services is to support New York City families in building skills to manage crises, maintain safety and stability within the home, and strengthen their ability to thrive within the community. With the help of a network of community-based providers, approximately 16,000 families (with more than 35,000 children) each year receive supports like family therapy, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, homemaking services, as well as concrete support, including food, diapers, cribs and more.

For more information about prevention services and to access our digital Prevention Provider Directory, please follow this link: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/child-welfare/prevention-services.page>

When foster care services are needed, ACS works closely with foster care providers to achieve permanency for children in a safe but timely manner. Agencies are issued yearly permanency targets in the areas of reunification, adoption and KinGAP (guardianship). The targets are used to measure performance and track permanency outcomes.

Please outline the budget impact in FY 2022 just concluded and anticipated for FY 2023 and FY 2024 of the implementation of the Blueprint, including:

- **key allocations for new or expanded programming,**
- **any cuts to service or programming attributable to funding changes or cuts, and**
- **overall Agency savings or efficiency promoted by these programs.**

ACS continues to aggressively implement our Foster Care Strategic Blueprint priorities, and our FY2021 Progress Report is available here: [FCStrategicBlueprintFY2021.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)

Through our Foster Care Strategic Blueprint, ACS has achieved measurable positive results, including fewer children in foster care; reduced length of stay in foster care; increased kinship placement and kinship guardianship; increased foster home recruitment; and expanded programming for older youth. We are building on this progress as we are now in the process of re-procuring and designing foster care services.

As mentioned above, ACS's FY2023 Adopted Budget did not contain any cuts to our core programs and services. As it relates to foster care, the budget included the following two additions:

- **Fair Futures:** ACS now has \$30.7 million of funding baselined in our budget for Fair Futures. This initiative has provided coaches and tutors for over 3,000 youth in foster care ages 11-21. The increased funding enables us to increase the per diem rate and to expand the program to active youth and youth out of care up to age 26.
- **Foster care:** We received \$120 million in city funds in FY 2023 to replace the \$120 million loss in federal funds. At the federal level, foster care reimbursement is tied to whether or not a family would be eligible for AFDC in 1996, —leading to fewer children being eligible for federal funds. ACS had Title IV-E waiver funds and funds from the Family First Transition Act, to address this funding deficit. However, both of the funding platforms ended. This funding addresses the decrease in federal reimbursement.

In addition, the budget supports our new foster care model, Enhanced Family Foster Care (EFFC), which combines and replaces the previous separately-contracted Family Foster Care (FFC) and Treatment Family Foster Care (TFFC) programs. EFFC recognizes that all children in care have experienced some level of trauma, that their needs may change over time, and that their strengths must be supported so they can reach their full potential. As a blended model, EFFC responds to the needs of the child and family and increases placement stability for the child. EFFC provides additional funding per child which allow foster care providers to leverage a more robust staffing model and foster home recruitment and support innovations.

As discussed above, the budget did also recognize savings attributable to the decreasing foster care census.

- **Please summarize the funding allocated to providing mental health services specifically targeted to Foster Care placements (including children and, to the extent offered, foster parents), including:**
 - **the number of positions or service providers engaged in offering such services,**
 - **the funding in FY 2022 – 2023 – 2024 for such services,**
 - **the numbers of individuals reached, and the prospects for continuing the programs, and**
 - **whether the funding in FY 2023 and projected FY 2024 is adequate to meet the program goals and anticipated needs.**

ACS contracts with 26 foster care agency providers. As part of their work with children and youth in foster care and their parents, foster care agencies are required to connect children/youth/parents to any service they need, including mental health supports.

As we expand Fair Futures, we will be expanding the availability of mental health resources for young people in care. One model we are exploring is a young person working with their coach to choose a therapist. With the coach’s guidance, the young person could identify three potential therapists, have a brief consultation with each, and then choose the therapist that’s right for them. This potential model allows youth in foster care to access mental health care in ways that haven’t been done before and could be a possible solution to youth who have been resistant to participating in mental health services.

Additionally, as mentioned above the EFFC model will FFC recognizes that all children in care have experienced some level of trauma, that their needs may change over time, and that their

strengths must be supported so they can reach their full potential. EFFC allows children, parents, and families to receive therapeutic services and supports, accessing a full menu of options with less separation into different programs.

- EFFC creates an opportunity to provide ongoing assessments of children and parents so the types and intensity of services can change depending on each family's needs. Families in EFFC placements will receive enhanced case management as well as a full array of services, treatment, and supports to help them thrive.
- When a child is placed into an EFFC foster home, providers will conduct an initial assessment. Each child will be assessed based on their developmental level, trauma exposure, current physical and emotional health, educational and behavioral strengths and challenges, and other individual strengths, needs and interests.
- Trauma Responsive and Informed Parenting (TRIPP), a new therapeutic foster care training for foster parents and staff is the core training component of EFFC. TRIPP is a learning program designed to prepare and support foster parents and child welfare professionals who are either parenting or working with children with therapeutic needs. The program will help participants gain a trauma informed lens when caring for children who have significant emotional and behavioral needs TRIPP allows participants to practice examining and reinterpreting the behavior of children, in order to appropriately respond to their underlying thoughts, feelings and needs, rather than react to their behavior. TRIPP uses a variety of learning approaches including:
 - In-class course work;
 - Homework assignments;
 - Videos; and,
 - Group role plays and activities

Youth in foster care remain eligible for Medicaid until age 26. This helps to ensure continuity of care and that they can receive health and mental health care after they leave foster care. Another resource for youth is The Fostering Connection (TFC). TFC offers long-term psychotherapy to foster-involved children, youth, and families, with licensed psychotherapists in their private offices, at no cost. Youth do not “age out” of TFC; a young person may continue to see a TFC therapist regardless of age or current foster care status. Another resource for youth in foster care is Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS). CFTSS is an outgrowth of the NYS Medicaid Redesign efforts. These services enable a greater focus on prevention and early intervention by providing an array of Medicaid benefits that offer opportunities to better meet the behavioral health needs at earlier junctures in a child/youth's life to prevent the onset or progression of behavioral health conditions. The benefits include crisis intervention, community psychiatric supports & treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation services, family peer support services, and youth peer advocacy and training.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 7: Aging Out of Foster Care

ACS's detailed responses to the Budget Consultation questions in previous years concerning children approaching the end of foster care eligibility included descriptive information concerning partnerships such as the ACS Fostering College Success Initiative; the ACS partnership with First Star, Inc./First Star Academy; the ACS partnership with CUNY and the Hilton Foundation for Transition Age Youth program; the ACS partnership with NYC DYCD for a Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP+) program; the ACS Office of Education Support and Policy Planning (OESPP); and the ACS Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives (OEWDI).

- Please provide a brief summary update of the funding allocated to these programs, and an assessment as to whether such funding is expected to be sufficient to meet ACS's goals for these efforts in FY 2023 and projected FY 2024. First Star Academy will continue to receive funding of \$100k, per fiscal year in FY 2023 to FY 2026.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

While most children and youth in foster care return home, are adopted, or achieve permanency through kinship guardianship, every young person's situation includes its own unique circumstances and challenges, and some will ultimately transition out of foster care to live independently. ACS is committed to providing all older youth in care with the necessary services and supports to acquire the skills to live a healthy, productive and self-sufficient adult life.

Youth age 18 or older can choose to leave foster care (as they are technically adults). In New York City, **no matter their age**, ACS will not discharge a young person from foster care if he/she does not have a safe, stable place to live. In fact, despite the lack of state or federal support, ACS goes a step further than other jurisdictions by extending foster care even beyond the age of 21 when necessary to ensure that a young person has stable housing and other supports they need. Additionally, those older than 18 who choose to leave foster care before they turn 21 still receive supports and services tailored to their unique challenges, and they can come back into foster care if needed. We have a process in place to make sure a youth can be immediately housed and assisted when needed, pending any further planning with the youth and their attorney and filing in court.

ACS has been strengthening the foster care system and implementing changes to make sure more and more doors of opportunity are open for youth in foster care, including through the implementation of “Fair Futures.” “Fair Futures” is a groundbreaking, first of its kind public-private partnership, that provides dedicated coaches, tutors and education, employment and housing specialists for youth with foster care involvement ages 11 to 26. Through Fair Futures, we support young people in the achievement of key milestones that put them on a path to success after they leave foster care to permanency or independent living. When it first launched in 2019, it provided thousands of youth ages 11 to 21 in foster care with coaches. The Adams administration recently provided additional resources to ACS so that we can expand the program to youth ages 21 to 26 and to youth in our juvenile justice programs. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. ACS has \$30.7 million baselined in our budget for Fair Futures.

The expansion of Fair Futures from ending at age 21, to go up to age 26, will enable youth leaving care to maintain the critical support of their coach through the challenging transitions that come with leaving care and becoming adults. This expansion, which is just beginning this month, is a key part of ACS’s plan to help youth transition out of foster care.

VCRED: ACS now offers a new vocational training and apprenticeship program that provides professional opportunities to youth, ages 16 to 24, in foster care. Announced by Mayor Adams in March the V-CRED program will support youth to increase their career and college readiness, achieve developmental milestones, and continue their personal development. V-CRED was created in partnership with the New Yorkers for Children, Commonpoint Queens Y, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The City University of New York (CUNY), and private sector employers. As part of the program, youth participate in training for professional certification through courses offered by CUNY’s Continuing Education Programs, participate in paid internships/apprenticeships, and have opportunities for employment with the employer hosting the internship. V-CRED focuses 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

SYEP: ACS provider agencies work with youth in and out of care, and in and out of college to assist with completing applications for enrollment into the City’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) internships. In addition to SYEP, ACS is also employing 250 students in care this summer through our own, home-grown College Internship Program.

FIRST STAR Through First Star Academy, high school students in care learn about and prepare for college with academic support, engagement activities, and a residential experience on a college campus. The program, which began in FY 2017, successfully graduated a four-year cohort in partnership with the College of Staten Island in 2021. In fact, 100% of program participants have graduated from high school and 85% enrolled in college with the remaining 15% entering alternative pathway programs such as, vocational or the military. ACS additionally partnered with the AT&T Foundation to enhance FirstStar programming with STEM focused activities and classes. The First Star program is currently in transition as we identify a new university partner, which we plan to have in place for Summer 2023.

LifeSet: In 2018, New Yorkers for Children, in partnership with ACS and Youth Villages, launched the LifeSet program in NYC. The program helps youth successfully transition to adulthood, with a specific focus on improving education, employment, and housing outcomes. Due to the program’s evidence base, LifeSet has been added to the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (CEBC) which identifies child welfare programs with empirical research supporting their efficacy. As of July

2022, 440 youth had been served in collaboration with Children's Aid, the New York Foundling, SCO and Good Shepherd.

Mentored Internship Program: ACS partnered with the Pinkerton Foundation to support a mentored-internship program that launched in January 2018 and has served more than 900 youth across twelve foster care agencies – Catholic Guardian Services, Children's Aid, Children's Village, Forestdale, Graham Windham, Good Shepherd Services, HeartShare St. Vincent's, JCCA, The New York Foundling, Rising Ground, SCO and Sheltering Arms. In FY 2021, the program served 180 youth. In FY 2022, the program served more than 300 youth. 200 mentors were recruited and trained. In addition, more than 50% of the youth enrolled in MIP since the program began have gained permanent employment. The program continues to provide programming on a virtual platform as well as in-person.

Advance and Earn Plus: In partnership with the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), in FY 2021 ACS enrolled 78 current and former foster care and juvenile justice involved youth into a pilot program, Advance and Earn Plus. In FY 2022, ACS enrolled 80 youth with child welfare experience. Formerly known as the YAIP+ and recently re-launched, the program enables youth ages 16-24 to receive work readiness training, assistance with qualifying for and completing their HSE diploma, and paid work experience. During the pandemic, the entire program was transitioned to an all virtual format and youth continued to be served.

For youth in care attending college, ACS provides a significant range of programming and supports. Examples of supports that we provide include:

- **172** students are receiving ACS' Fostering College Success stipend, available to full-time students residing in dormitory housing.
- During the 2021-22 academic year, **135** students were enrolled ACS's Fostering College Success Initiative (formerly known as the "Dorm Project"), a partnership with CUNY and foster care agency New York Foundling. Through FCSI, students in foster care who attend CUNY and other institutions receive tutoring, coaching, career counseling, and other supports to help them successfully complete college. FCSI participants who attend CUNY schools were able to reside at dorms operated by Queens College and Hunter College this past academic year.
- **30** students age 21 years old or older received support from ACS to fund their college room and board during the 2021-2022 academic year (College Room and Board Program).

Based on youth and partner feedback, for the 2022-23 academic year ACS has made significant enhancements to the services and supports that we provide to young people attending college. We've taken the existing programs highlighted above---the Fostering College Success Initiative, Fostering College Success Stipend, and College Room and Board---and combined them into one program with enhanced benefits and streamlined eligibility rules. The College Choice Program puts our youth in the driver's seat and gives them options around where they want to attend school, where they would like to live, and what type of academic support they'd like to receive. Specifically, the program offers online and in-person tutoring, coaching, and career counseling provided by NY Foundling. Year-round housing costs are covered by ACS for youth to live-on campus at a college/university, or in a CUNY or private dorm (students in NYC), or in safe housing with a private landlord (students outside of NYC). Tuition costs and related fees are likewise covered by ACS (after financial aid is applied) and \$60 per day stipend to cover the cost of food and other college living expenses will be provided to students. Students can continue to receive the stipend for up to 6 months after they graduate with a degree.

ACS continues its commitment to support the post-secondary goals of students in foster care. New York City is unique in that students have multiple levels of social-emotional and financial support pathways, including assistance from provider agencies, ACS, SUNY CUNY, and NYS Opportunity Programs. These supports can provide a pathway to success for either a traditional college or vocational training settings

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 8: Capital Projects in Progress

Please provide an update on capital projects and their funding for Manhattan for FY 2023 and anticipated for FY 2024, whether as part of the ACS FY 2020-2029 capital plan or funded/implemented outside that plan.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

ACS's ten-year capital plan is \$577.4 million from FY 2022 through FY 2031, of which \$77.8 million falls into FY 2022 and \$107.4 million falls into FY 2023. Almost 60% of our capital plan of \$577.4 million is for DYFJ RTA 2.0. Additionally, ACS is currently in the planning phase for renovations (funded at \$14.8 million) to increase programmatic space at the ACS Children's Center, which is a 24/7 temporary care center for children entering foster care, located in Manhattan CD 6.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 9: Juvenile Justice Programs

Please provide a summary update of the funding allocated to each of ACS's core areas of service and programming related to Juvenile Justice for FY 2023 and projected FY 2024, including:

- Preventive Programs, including the Family Assessment Program;
- Detention programs, including services provided to children and youth while in a detention setting aimed at eliminating recurrence of such detention;
- Placement Services, including the Close-To-Home program and non-secure detention alternatives;
- Alternatives such as Quest, Way Home, Juvenile Justice Initiatives; and
- Respite programs.

For each, please estimate the adequacy of the funding allocated/anticipated to meet ACS's goals, particularly with respect to diverting or preventing escalation of interactions with law enforcement or detention.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Please see below for the FY23 funding for each of the juvenile justice items requested. ACS believes that we are sufficiently funded in these areas, but we continuously discuss this with OMB to make any adjustments that are needed. Our goals are to prevent crime and interaction with law enforcement whenever possible, by providing youth with the services and supports they need in the community whenever possible. For those youth who do need to come into detention or close to home placement, we are focused on providing them with the services and supports that will lead to more positive outcomes. This year, ACS received funding to expand Fair Futures coaches and tutors to youth in our continuum of juvenile justice programs and we believe this will provide youth with an important additional support.

- **Preventive Programs, including the Family Assessment Program:**

ACS's **Family Assessment Program (FAP)** provides support to families and youth up to age 18 who are struggling with everyday challenges. FAP works to strengthen families, reduce conflict, and help families handle concerns such as a child running away, skipping school, using drugs or alcohol, or showing disruptive or dangerous behavior. The FY2023 budget for FAP is \$13.4 million.

FAP services are voluntary, and each family can receive an individualized assessment with a social worker who specializes in family crisis resolution. Our FAP offices connect families to our FAP Service Continuum or to community-based organizations, based on the needs of the family. In Manhattan, the FAP Service Continuum includes the below services:

- **Family Stabilization, Children’s Aid Society.** An intensive crisis intervention that engages and assess the family for a period of no longer than 60 days to effectively create a collaborative service plan.
- **Mentoring and Advocacy Program (MAAP), CASES.** Individualized, strength and advocacy-based wraparound support services for youth. Each youth is matched with a credible messenger/mentor whose focus is to provide guidance in developing better self-esteem, creating healthy relationships, and making positive life choices
- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Children’s Aid Society.** An intensive evidence-based family treatment model that consists of a small team of highly trained therapists that provide therapeutic sessions in the home over a four-month period.
- **Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), New York Foundling.** A 16-week evidence-based family intervention developed for treatment of families with children 6-18 years old that focuses on the family as the most influential context for youth, to help create healthier family functioning and address youth at-risk and drug use behaviors.
- **Multi-Systemic Therapy Substance Abuse Adaptation (MST-SA), Children’s Aid.** A very intensive evidence-based therapeutic intervention that provides therapy to the entire family in the home over a period of four months. Therapists visit the home multiple times per week and are available by phone 24 hours a day.
- **Juvenile Justice Respite Program, Rising Ground.** For youth who are most at risk of placement or detention, Respite is a 21-day voluntary program that aims to de-escalate conflict within families and improve individual and family functioning by placing the youth temporarily out of the family home and into a home with a highly trained foster parent, while working closely with the parent to improve family functioning so that the youth can return home.
- **Detention programs, including services provided to children and youth while in a detention setting aimed at eliminating recurrence of such detention;**

Secure detention is typically reserved for youth who pose the highest risk or who have been accused of committing serious offenses. The Court can detain youth who are alleged or adjudicated juvenile delinquents, juvenile offenders or adolescent offenders to secure detention. Juvenile delinquents have their cases heard in the Family Court. Juvenile offenders and adolescent offenders have their cases heard in the Youth Part of Supreme Court and some are eligible to have their cases waived down to Family Court, at which point the youth are considered Juvenile Delinquents.

ACS operates two secure detention facilities- Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brownsville, Brooklyn and Horizon Juvenile Center in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx. These facilities have the most restrictive security features amongst juvenile facilities.

The budget for secure detention is: \$47M

ACS contracts for 7 **non-secure detention (NSD)** sites. NSD provides a less restrictive alternative to secure detention for Juvenile Delinquents who are remanded to ACS custody by the Family Court. NSD facilities are group homes that lack physically restrictive hardware, construction, and procedures and are in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Each home houses 12 or fewer youth, offering young people a supportive, family-like environment and close supervision during their time in detention. Upon admission to NSD, youth receive medical and mental health screening, assessment, evaluations, and clinical services as necessary. The budget for NSD is \$18.4M

- **Placement Services, including the Close-To-Home program**

ACS's **Close to Home** initiative has transformed New York City's approach to juvenile justice and has become a national and international model. In Spring 2019, the Columbia Justice Lab issued a report noting that Close to Home can and should serve as a roadmap for other jurisdictions to emulate (see <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/moving-beyond-youth-prisons> to access the full report). Compared to the landscape prior to 2012, when NYC kids were housed with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in large geographically isolated institutions upstate, NYC's system demonstrates how a well-resourced and trauma-informed system can reduce juvenile justice involvement, create new pathways of success for young people, and keep communities safe. The budget for Close to Home is \$136.48M

- **Alternatives such as Quest, Way Home, Juvenile Justice Initiatives; and**

Quest and Way Home are not programs managed or contracted with by ACS.

Juvenile Justice Initiative (JJI) is an alternative-to-placement program aimed at diverting young people who have been found by the Family Court as Juvenile Delinquents from being placed in a Close to Home residence. Instead of placement in a group home, youth in JJI are able to stay at home and receive intensive Evidence Based Programs and services in the community, while being supervised by the NYC Department of Probation. Depending on the family's needs, assigned therapists may see the family several times a week and are available on call 24 hours a day. The therapy engages the entire family and targets a range of issues, including mental health, substance abuse, peer difficulties, school-related challenges, and family troubles. JJI serves approximately 200 youth annually. The budget for JJI is: \$16M

- **Respite programs.**

The **Juvenile Justice Respite Program** is part of FAP. For youth who are most at risk of placement or detention, Respite is a 21-day voluntary program that aims to de-escalate conflict within families and improve individual and family functioning by placing the youth temporarily out of the family home and into a home with a highly trained foster parent, while working closely with the parent to improve family functioning so that the youth can return home. The budget for the respite program is: \$776K

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 10: Recommended Priorities for Community Board Budget Priorities or Advocacy

What expense or capital needs would ACS recommend or encourage Community Boards advocate be funded or expanded in FY 2024 or beyond?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

ACS's mission is to promote the safety, permanency and well-being of New York City's children and young people. We encourage the Community Boards to support our core program areas, focusing on the services that address family needs upstream.

With COVID-19 and the ensuing economic crisis, we see families struggling to meet basic food, housing, and education needs. As we move through reopening and recovery, it will be crucial for the state and federal government to sustain and enhance critical resources for families like food assistance, income assistance, housing support, access to health and mental health services, in addition to ACS's programs that are supporting and strengthening families.

We hope the Community Boards, as the direct voices of the communities and families that you serve, will also consider advocating for these important priorities.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS: