

Mayor Adams, First Deputy Mayor Mastro and Deputy Mayor Almanzar Announce Inaugural Winners of Excellence in Human Service Delivery Awards, Honoring Outstanding Nonprofits and Public Servants

Adams Administration Celebrates Outstanding Nonprofits and City Employees Who Work Together to Build and Maintain the Social Safety Net in Honor of NYC Nonprofit Week

Awards Bolster Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services' Efforts to Build a Customer Service Culture Across City Agencies

[Official Photos Available Online](#)

NEW YORK (August 20, 2025)— Yesterday, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro, Deputy Mayor Ana Almanzar, and Executive Director Michael Sedillo of the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services (MONS) honored eight winners at the inaugural *Excellence in Human Service Delivery Awards* (EHSDAs) during a ceremony at Gracie Mansion. The event recognized outstanding nonprofit organizations and public servants who go above and beyond to serve New Yorkers—through innovative problem-solving, operational excellence, and dedicated public service that strengthen the city's human services social safety net.

Launched this year by MONS, the EHSDAs recognize and celebrate the vital partnership between city staff and nonprofit organizations. The awards support MONS' mission to transform the culture across city agencies by strengthening customer service for our nonprofit partners, in service of New Yorkers. MONS received over 100 nominations: City agency employees nominated nonprofit providers with active contracts, while nonprofit organizations nominated city staff who support them through the contracting process. A selection committee composed of nonprofit leaders and city employees reviewed applications and interviewed finalists. Each honored city staffer received a \$1,000 cash award, generously funded by the Partnership for New York City. Nonprofit winners were presented with commemorative trophies.

"This first-ever Excellence in Human Service Delivery Awards is about more than recognition — it's about honoring the people who make New York City work for everyone," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "We're celebrating our incredible nonprofit organizations that have delivered critical services across the five boroughs, as well as our tireless public servants, who have solved problems, cut red tape, and made sure help gets where it's needed most. With their innovation, compassion, and commitment to continuously get stuff done, these honorees represent the very best of our city. I'm proud to stand with them as we continue to build a stronger, fairer, and more caring New York City together.

"Far too often, unsung heroes who carry out the most vital work in our communities go without recognition - but not today," said **First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro**. "With the Adams Administration's launch of the first-ever Excellence in Human Service Delivery Awards, we are standing up and acknowledging our incredible non-profit partners who deliver vital services to some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. However, we know our actions speak louder than our words - that's why Mayor Adams initiated an unprecedented investment of up to 50 percent in

advance payments for non-profits and nearly doubled the amount of contracts registered on time."

"Today's celebration is more than an awards ceremony — it's a reminder of the dedication and impact that define New York City's human services sector," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Ana J. Almanzar**. "Through the Action & Innovation Award, we proudly recognize nonprofits that delivers essential services, strengthen communities and lead the way in building more effective partnerships between government and the nonprofit sector. Their work reflects the very best of our city — and it's why the Adams administration remains deeply committed to ensuring they have the timely support and resources they need to serve New Yorkers without delay."

"In New York City, our human services sector is so vibrant because of the people that bring it to life. Today's awards highlight exemplary work in both nonprofits outside of government and public servants within city government," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Suzanne Miles-Gustave**. "Congratulations to all the honorees and thank you for all you have done and will continue to do to help your fellow New Yorker. "

"The inaugural Excellence in Human Service Delivery Awards celebrates the vital partnership between City government and nonprofit providers that power New York City's safety net," said **Michael Sedillo, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services**. "Today, we honor extraordinary public servants who help our nonprofit partners navigate bureaucracy with a customer service mindset, as well as the nonprofit providers whose commitment, creativity, and compassion make a real difference in the lives of New Yorkers every day. Their work embodies the very best of our city and demonstrates what's possible when neighbors come together to ensure every New Yorker has the support they need to thrive."

This year's EHSDAs award winners are:

Action & Innovation Award

Celebrates individuals who introduce creative, forward-thinking solutions that improve service delivery, program impact, or government partnerships.

- **Nonprofit Winner:** [Mount Sinai REACH Program](#)
- **City Staff Winner:** Shakina Shaw, Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor and COMPASS Director at the [Department of Youth and Community Development](#)

Excellence in Customer Service Award

Honors city employees who go above and beyond to support nonprofit providers through clear communication, responsive coordination, and timely action. Also recognizes nonprofits whose frontline work demonstrates exceptional impact in meeting community needs.

- **Nonprofit Winner:** [The Elder Law Unit at Brooklyn Legal Services](#)
- **City Staff Winner:** Markida Murrell-Owens, Contract Specialist II at the [Department of Youth and Community Development](#)

Operational Excellence Award

Recognizes organizations that model efficient systems, fiscal stewardship, and streamlined processes that help New Yorkers thrive.

- **Nonprofit Winner:** [Center for Family Life in Sunset Park](#)
- **City Agency Winner:** [Administration for Children's Services](#)

Emerging Nonprofit Award

Honors smaller, newer organizations making a significant impact in New York City communities.

- **Nonprofit Winner:** [REM Center Inc.](#)

Lifetime Achievement Award

Honors an individual who has dedicated their career to strengthening the city's nonprofit sector.

- **Nonprofit Leader Winner:** Dr. Rosa Gil, Founder and CEO of [Comunilife, Inc.](#)

“ACS is committed to keeping children safe and families supported and we could not carry out that mission without our vital partnerships with nonprofit providers. Our nonprofit partners provide the support in communities across NYC that children, youth and families need to thrive. We are so grateful for all that they do,” **said NYC ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser.** “I am honored to accept this award for Operational Excellence on behalf of the hard-working ACS team that ensures our non-profit providers have the tools and resources they need to do their vital work. Congratulations to all the public servants and non-profit organizations being recognized today.

“We are honored to receive this recognition from the Mayor’s Office and grateful to the New York City Department for the Aging for their steadfast support,” **said Daniel Barkley, Director, Elder Law & Veterans Justice Project at Legal Services NYC.** “Serving older New Yorkers, many of whom are coping with disabilities, diminishing capacity, and the risk of isolation, is essential to ensure they can age with dignity and safety in the homes and communities they love. We look forward to continuing our partnership with New York City as we work to make sure older New Yorkers have the support, benefits, and services they need to live happy, vibrant lives.”

“We are deeply honored to receive this award, and incredibly grateful to be recognized for our work,” **said Krystal Astwood, Founder of the REM Center Inc.** “The impact we’ve been able to make would simply not be possible without our passionate and dedicated Family Enrichment Center staff, Parent Advisory Committee, and our family partners and volunteers in the Mott Haven/Melrose community. Thank you to the Mayor’s Office for Nonprofit Services, our agency partners at the Administration for Children’s Services, our partners at ACS’ Division of Child and Family Well-being (CFWB) for their unwavering support, our staff and families. We’re looking forward to growing and developing with our communities, and will continue to keep our ears and hearts open as we strive for excellence.”

"We are deeply grateful to Mayor Adams and to the many New York City agencies that we partner with for the opportunity to serve New York City's incredible families and their precious children," said **Julia Jean-Francois, Ph.D., LCSW, Co-Executive Director, Center for Family Life In Sunset Park**. "Our mission is to lift up the dignity and unlimited potential of the families we serve. The amazing New Yorkers in our community represent our shared future, and we strive to perform our work at the highest level of administrative excellence as they deserve only the very best."

"I am honored to receive the city's first Lifetime Achievement Award for the EHSDAs," said **Dr. Rosa M. Gil, Founder & Former President & CEO of Comunilife, Inc.** "This recognition is not only a personal milestone, but also a tribute to the incredible work of everyone who has walked alongside me in service to our communities. For over two decades, Comunilife has been my life's mission—to create supportive housing and mental health services provided with dignity, hope, and culturally competency to those who need it most. I share this award with my dedicated team, our community partners, and the resilient individuals we served during the years. Together, we have strengthened the nonprofit sector and, more importantly, transformed lives. Thank you again for this honor."

"I am truly honored to have an incredible team, to serve as a bridge in the field I love, and to be recognized by the provider(s) who believed I was worthy of this honor," said Shakina Shaw, **EEO Counselor and COMPASS Director at the Department of Youth and Community Development**. "The highlights of my journey are a reflection of the strong partnerships I've built over more than 25 years of service in youth and community development. I'm especially proud to be the first awardee from the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services. Thank you to Mayor Adams, Commissioner Howard, my DYCD-COMPASS team, and all those, both known and behind the scenes, who contributed to this moment. I appreciate each of you and will continue to be a dedicated advocate for our work."

"Receiving this award validates my 27-year commitment to serving the City of New York and underscores the importance of providing assistance to individuals and nonprofits organization in need," said **Markida Murrell-Owens, Contract Specialist II at the Department of Youth and Community Development**. "I am grateful for the recognition from the mayor's office, my DYCD team and the nonprofits that nominated me, as well as the selection panel. I appreciate the collective efforts of all involved."

To learn more about the EHSDAs and this year's honorees, click [here](#).

Today's announcement also builds on the Adams administration's continued efforts to significantly invest in, support, and enact policies that uplift the nonprofit sector in New York City. Earlier this spring, MONS relaunched **ContractStat**, a system that brings data-driven accountability to nonprofit contracting, providing both quantitative metrics — such as contract registration and payment timelines — and qualitative insights. In addition, Mayor Adams announced [Executive Order 47](#), which established the role of **Chief Nonprofit Officers** to improve services, deliver quality customer support in response to nonprofit outreach, and expedite payments and communications with nonprofit providers. Today, 18 [chief nonprofit officers](#) have been appointed by city agencies, working closely with nonprofit organizations to drive progress.

In March 2024, the Adams administration announced a [\\$741 million investment for an estimated 80,000 human services workers](#) employed by nonprofit organizations with a city contract as part of a new cost-of-living adjustment. The human services workforce — which is [overwhelmingly female at 66 percent and 46 percent women of color](#) — remains on the frontlines of the most pressing issues facing the city as they deliver vital services across housing, food access, health services, and asylum seeker services, among other areas. To date, the Adams administration has invested over \$1.4 billion towards wage enhancements for the human services sector. The Adams administration also worked with MOCS on the [“Clear the Backlog” initiative](#), which has unlocked over \$6 billion in funds for nonprofits that were long overdue, allowing these organizations to get paid for delivering their vital services. Finally, in April 2024, Mayor Adams announced the [city’s first-ever Nonprofit Advisory Council](#). Comprised of leaders and experts in the nonprofit sector, the advisory council works with MONS to serve as a link between the Adams administration and the nonprofit organizations dedicated to serving New Yorkers.

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