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CONTACT: communications@probation.nyc.gov, (212) 510-3720

DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES FINDINGS: ADVOCACY-BASED COMMUNITY MENTORING PROGRAM REDUCES YOUTH INCARCERATION

NEW YORK— First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson and New York City Department of Probation Commissioner Ana M. Bermúdez today announced new research showing that the Advocate, Intervene, Mentor (AIM) program helps high-risk youth ages 13-18 years under probation supervision avoid incarceration. [The independent evaluation](#), conducted in partnership with the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center, found that participants pursued and achieved goals to reduce their risk of further justice system involvement.

“While anyone who has interacted with these kids knows that this program works, the Urban Institute study provides us with indisputable statistical evidence. I’m so proud of the kids who work every day to get back on track and so thankful to the mentors who help them get there,” stated **Dean Fuleihan, First Deputy Mayor**.

“With the release of the Advocate, Intervene, and Mentor (AIM) program evaluation, we are reminded of the vital importance of mentorship - particularly among our more vulnerable, juvenile justice-involved young people. I commend Commissioner Bermúdez, her talented staff, and our incredible mentors and advocates for their inspiring work to help our young people reach their fullest potential,” said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**.

“AIM is an intensive, community-based program rooted in mentoring relationships with credible messengers that works to improve the personal outcomes of juvenile justice involved young people and reduces incarceration and re-arrests, thereby keeping kids at home in their communities and New York City safe,” said **Ana M. Bermúdez, Commissioner, New York City Department of Probation**. “The Urban Institute evaluation findings come at a particularly critical time, as New York recently raised the age of criminal responsibility. This means that more young people will have access to this developmentally-appropriate and impactful program.”

AIM is a six to nine month sentence in Family Court that matches each participating youth with an advocate-mentor. Advocate-mentors are “credible messengers,” defined as individuals who may have come from the same neighborhood and otherwise have similar backgrounds as the young people they work with, and who have transformed their own lives after their justice

system involvement. Through the creation of service plans, the advocate-mentors work to help young people change their attitudes and behaviors to improve their lives and avoid further justice system involvement.

The Urban Institute evaluation findings about AIM: Over 90% percent of participants did not get arrested for a felony within 12 months of enrollment—far exceeding the program target of 60%.

- Nearly 7 in 10 AIM participants completed the program without the need for incarceration (out-of-home placement.)
- Fewer than 10 % of participants received a felony adjudication in Family Court, and only 3% received a felony conviction in Criminal Court.

In addition to one-on-one mentorship, AIM mentors advocate on behalf of youth participants in educational and other settings, so that participants can progress toward their goals. Further, advocate-mentors foster positive decision-making in social settings by helping to divert youth from activities that could result in re-arrest and probation violations, which could in turn result in incarceration.

The cost of the AIM program is significantly lower than the cost of incarceration. Research has also shown that incarceration can have a negative effect on a youth's development and can lead to an increase in criminal behavior and rearrests.

“The independent evaluation of the AIM program highlights the importance of credible messengers and mentorship,” said **Matthew Klein, Executive Director at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity**. “Evaluations like these help the City determine what's working and use evidence to make decisions. The AIM program is successfully helping young people to pursue their goals and reduce their involvement with the justice system.”

“AIM plays a vital role in the City's juvenile justice system, helping participants to remain in their communities, to access needed services. This evaluation contributes to the field of research on Alternative to Placement (ATP) programming and adds to the growing body of evidence supporting credible messenger mentoring for justice system-involved youth and young adults,” said **Carson C. Hicks, Deputy Executive Director, at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity**.

“Programs like AIM help change the life trajectory of youth involved in the justice system, a population disproportionately made up of boys of color. The evaluation shows how YMI's investment in AIM creates opportunities for youth to access transformative support and guidance, positioning them to lead successful lives and make a positive impact in their communities,” said **Charissa Townsend, Executive Director, Young Men's Initiative**.

AIM launched in 2012 as part of the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI), a comprehensive public-private strategy to engage boys and young men of color in achieving personal, professional, and academic goals.

AIM operates in all five New York City boroughs by local, community-based service providers. While each of the five providers customize certain program elements, the core components of AIM as designed by DOP remain consistent across all boroughs:

- **Advocate-mentor:** Each youth is matched with an advocate-mentor, who is recognized in the community as a credible messenger.
- **Individual Action Plan (IAP):** Each participant's family, advocate-mentor, and probation officer meet with the participant to develop a plan to achieve personal development goals.
- **Intensity:** The youth and mentor meet for up to 30 hours a week to build relationships, move toward IAP goals, and participate in social activities.
- **Family Team meetings:** The participant's support team, including their mentor, family, and probation officer, meets regularly with the youth to determine progress toward achieving their goals.

About the New York City Department of Probation

The New York City Department of Probation (DOP) helps build stronger and safer communities by working with and supervising people on probation, fostering positive change in their decision-making and behavior. DOP expands opportunities for them to move out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement, and civic participation.

About the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

The Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) uses evidence and innovation to reduce poverty and increase equity. It advances research, data, and design in the City's program and policy development, service delivery, and budget decisions. NYC Opportunity's work includes analyzing existing anti-poverty approaches, developing new interventions, facilitating the sharing of data across City agencies, and rigorously assessing the impact of critical initiatives. NYC Opportunity manages a discrete fund and works collaboratively with City agencies to design, test and oversee new programs and digital products. It also produces research and analysis of poverty and social conditions, including its influential annual Poverty Measure, which provides a more accurate and comprehensive picture of poverty in New York City than the federal rate. Several of NYC Opportunity's programs have been incorporated into the Young Men's Initiative, a comprehensive and expansive program designed to address disparities between young African-American and Latino men and their peers.

About the Young Men's Initiative:

New York City's Young Men's Initiative (YMI) is the nation's most comprehensive municipal effort to improve the lives of boys and young men of color (BYMOC). YMI's mission is to develop and champion policies, programs, and partnerships that holistically support the success of young men of color throughout NYC. This mission is accomplished through broad policy recommendations, changes, and agency reforms and by connecting the city's young men of color

to individuals, opportunities, and organizations that improve the quality of their lives and lead them to a more successful future.

About the Urban Institute

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy and is the United States' leading research organization dedicated to developing evidence-based insights that improve people's lives and strengthen communities. With nearly 50 years of expertise, Urban is a trusted resource for timely, analysis of social and economic policy. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the fiscal health of government across a rapidly urbanizing world.

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