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NYC Department of Social Services Commissioner Park Announces Key Agency Accomplishments in 2024

In 2024, the Department of Social Services Connected More Households to Permanent Housing, Streamlined Processes, and Implemented Innovative Programs and Reforms to Better Serve our Clients

As we near the end of another eventful and productive year, New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Molly Wasow Park today highlighted the agency's ability to advance key priorities in 2024, despite facing considerable challenges. These accomplishments underscore both the Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) and the Human Resources Administration's (HRA) ability to continue raising the bar on services by implementing innovative programs and systems that enhance our ability to provide effective services to New Yorkers in need.

"From day one, our administration has focused on creating a safer, more affordable New York City. In 2024, we continued to deliver on that vision and 'Get Stuff Done' for working-class New Yorkers," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "Thanks to our extraordinary public servants, America's safest big city got even safer this year, with overall crime down and thousands of illegal guns, mopeds, and ghost cars taken off city streets. We passed historic legislation to turn New York into a 'City of Yes,' shattered affordable housing records once again, and put billions of dollars back into New Yorkers' pockets. We broke records for the most jobs and small businesses in city history and moved millions of trash bags off our sidewalks and into containers. But we know that there is even more we can do to continue to uplift working-class families. As we look to the future, our administration remains committed to keeping New Yorkers safe and making our city more affordable for the millions of New Yorkers who call our city home."

"Each of these accomplishments reflects the tremendous work of our staff, and our provider staff, who each and every day, dedicate themselves to serving vulnerable populations and helping our neighbors on their path to stability, said **DSS Commissioner Molly Wasow Park**. "As a result, DSS was able to connect a record number of households in shelter to permanent housing for a second consecutive year, use CityFHEPS vouchers to support the creation of hundreds of units of deeply affordable housing, greatly improve our benefits processing, and so much more. The services and supports we provide are often life-changing, and as we look to the new year, we look forward to building on these accomplishments and doing more to support our neighbors in need."

Some notable accomplishments from 2024 include:

Creating Permanent Affordable Housing with Social Service Dollars: It's no secret that New York City is in a housing crunch. Vacancy rates remain historically low while sky-high housing costs are driving working-class families out of the city. At the same time, thousands of New

Yorkers experiencing homelessness remain in shelter, despite having a rental assistance voucher, as a result of both the aforementioned housing shortage, and more insidiously, source of income discrimination. To directly combat both ills and more expeditiously move households from shelter to housing, this year, [DSS officially launched the Affordable Housing Services \(AHS\) initiative](#) to create permanent affordable homes for New Yorkers in the shelter system with City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) vouchers. Through this initiative, the city helps nonprofits purchase or enter long-term, building-wide leases on affordable housing sites, ensuring long-term affordability and strong tenant protections for CityFHEPS voucher holders while also funding light-touch services for tenants. Through AHS, DSS has created nearly 400 units with another 500 units in the pipeline.

Record-Setting Connections to Permanent Housing: Connecting New Yorkers in shelter to affordable, permanent housing is a top priority of DHS, and the agency has taken meaningful steps to improve and expedite the process of obtaining a voucher and housing for those in the shelter system. As a result, [DHS was able to connect over 18,500 households in shelter to permanent housing](#) despite an historically low housing vacancy rate – a 24 percent increase compared to FY23 and another record-setting year for shelter exits. This continued success demonstrates not just tangible impacts of the agency’s efforts to streamline processes and cut unnecessary red tape, but the hard work of DHS housing navigators and frontline shelter staff who dedicate their days to helping the city’s most vulnerable get back on their feet and into a safe and stable home.

The expanded use of CityFHEPS vouchers was a primary driver of this increase in shelter exits to housing with the majority of households exiting shelter with CityFHEPS vouchers. In all, over 13,000 households, including those in the community, were able to use a CityFHEPS voucher to obtain housing in FY24, a record in itself and a 42 percent increase over FY23 figures. As other levels of government continue to abandon their responsibility to provide and fund housing vouchers, New York City continues to step in to meet the moment and support New Yorkers in need with entirely city-funded rental assistance.

Supporting our Neighbors Living Unsheltered: The Adam’s administration continues to make good on its promise to strengthen interagency collaboration and enhance the supports available for New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness. DHS and our not-for-profit service providers are on the streets and subways 24/7/365 establishing relationships with New Yorkers and urging them to come inside. While this outreach takes time and required multiple touchpoints, we have made real progress through initiatives like the Subway Safety Plan, which, since its launch in February 2022, has helped connect over 8,000 individuals to shelter. More than 700 of these individuals are now residing in subsidized, permanent housing. Given the higher prevalence of clients with extremely complex health-related needs, including severe mental health and substance use, encountered during end-of-line outreach, these cases represent incredible breakthroughs and illustrate the life-changing impact of these efforts.

Since the start of this administration, and inclusive of all outreach efforts, approximately 2,700 New Yorkers who were experiencing unsheltered homelessness on our streets and subways are now in permanent homes. We are proud to continue collaborating with our agency partners on new and evidence-based outreach initiatives like [Partnership Assistance for Transit](#)

[Homelessness \(PATH\)](#) which partners DHS nurses and outreach staff with NYPD transit police. PATH teams conduct outreach overnight at subway stations across Manhattan from 8:00 PM to 12:00 AM and supplements other outreach initiatives like the city-MTA partnership Subway Co-Response Outreach Teams (SCOUT).

Improving Benefit Processing: Following the premature expiration of the expanded, pandemic-era social safety net, low-income and working-class New Yorkers were forced to navigate with the rising costs and economic uncertainty with less money in their pockets. This led to a precipitous increase in applications for SNAP and CA, placing considerable strain on the agency's benefit processing units and leading to a processing backlog. HRA worked diligently to eliminate this backlog – quickly hiring and onboarding staff to process benefits, optimizing processes, and streamlining workflows – and was able to [reduce the SNAP and CA backlogs by 97% while concurrently strengthening access to these benefits](#) and providing these critical benefits to more New Yorkers in need. Nearly 2 million New Yorkers rely on SNAP and CA to meet their daily needs.

Replacing Millions in Electronically Stolen SNAP and CA Benefits: As low-income New Yorkers continue to fall victim to electronic benefits theft, primarily via skimming where bad actors steal their public benefits by copying card details using skimming devices on point-of-sale machine, HRA continued efficiently and effectively connecting victims to critical replacement SNAP and CA benefits. Since replacement benefits became available, the agency approved \$44 million in replacement benefits, and we continue to advocate for the federal government to extend funding for replacement SNAP benefits so New Yorkers can continue to reclaim the benefits that are rightfully theirs.

Investing in Innovative Shelter Models: Creating a more responsive and effective shelter system is an iterative process, and DHS is committed to not only enhancing existing supports, but identifying and investing in novel programs and supports that better meet the needs of those we serve. This year, DHS unveiled two new and groundbreaking shelter programs in partnership with our not-for-profit providers. This includes [opening the first-ever pet-friendly DHS shelter](#) with the Urban Resource Institute. This model, inspired by URI's successful People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program for survivors of domestic violence, pioneers pet-inclusive sheltering in the city and exemplifies DHS's commitment to creating a more human-centered and trauma-informed system.

Additionally, [DHS and the Osborne Association opened a transitional housing facility for formerly incarcerated men over the age of 50](#), the first DHS shelter of this kind. This program taps into the Osborne Association's extensive history of supporting New Yorkers with a history of criminal justice involvement who face tremendous barriers to accessing permanent housing. The facility offers residents services tailored to people returning from long-term incarceration, including peer mentors to walk alongside residents in their first days home.

Connecting Low-Income New Yorkers to Employment: HRA is committed to ensuring that pathways to good-paying jobs and self-sufficiency are available to all New Yorkers, regardless of their current circumstances. The Agency offers a wide array of resources and services for individual seeking gainful employment including the HireNYC, which connects New Yorkers on

CA to jobs with city contractors and Jobs-Plus, which provides place-based employment service to 40 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments across all five boroughs. [In FY24, nearly 10,000 low-income New Yorkers were connected to employment opportunities through HRA's Business Link program.](#) Of those, nearly 8,200 New Yorkers receiving CA were connected to a range of quality employment opportunities with providers subject to HireNYC requirements, representing a 44 percent increase year-over-year. HRA also continues to prioritize connections to growing industries and in-demand careers through programs like NYC Pathways to Industrial and Construction Careers (PINCC). PINCC connects low-income New Yorkers to career navigation, job readiness training, and direct job placement within the industrial, transportation, and construction sectors in New York City, all at no costs to the participant.

Enhancing Supports for Survivors of Domestic Violence: DSS recognizes that domestic violence is a primary driver of homelessness among families in New York City and understands critical importance of providing a safe space and trauma informed care for survivors to stay as they begin the process of healing. We know it is also imperative that every survivor has access to the resources and supports that will position them for long-term stability, which is why [DHS partnered with New Destiny on Project Home](#), a pilot which will provides specialized housing search assistance and aftercare services to 100 domestic violence survivors with children living in DHS shelters. Participating families will be directly connected to a specialized housing navigator — trained in the challenging dynamics of domestic violence as well as affordable housing — who will work closely with each family to quickly secure permanent housing. DHS has referred over 100 families to the Project Home Pilot. Following the placement of all families, DSS will conduct a robust evaluation of the results of the pilot, including its ability to shorten shelter stays, place families in new homes, and help those families remain stably housed. Additionally, to expand housing options for survivors, HRA has updated eligibility criteria to make survivors of domestic violence eligible for NYC 15/15 supportive housing units and we are in the final stages of making the requisite updates to our systems to enact this change in eligibility.

Making Transit More Accessible: For the second year in a row, Mayor Adams, in partnership with the City Council, has increased investments in the Fair Fares transit discount, allowing HRA to expand program eligibility from 120% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 145% of the FPL. Following last year's program expansion, Fair Fares enrollment has continued to increase steadily with [over 350,000 New Yorkers taking advantage of half-priced fares](#). As we prepared to implement this program expansion, we look forward to helping tens of thousands of additional New Yorkers afford to travel around the city without breaking the bank.

Opening a New IDNYC Enrollment Center in the Bronx: IDNYC, the nation's largest and most successful municipal ID program, offers all New Yorkers, regardless of background or immigration status, a government-issued photo identification broadly accepted across New York City. Following the unprecedented influx of new arrivals, demand for IDNYC cards rose steeply, but thanks to the Agency's expansion of eligibility criteria, streamlining of processes to ensure inclusive and equitable access, [and the opening of a new IDNYC enrollment center in the Bronx](#), HRA has been able to significantly increase appointment availability and enroll more New Yorkers in the program than in recent pre-pandemic years. In FY24, HRA issued over 180,000 IDNYC cards, the most since FY17. The new IDNYC center, which increased capacity for

processing enrollments, is strategically co-located at a Benefits Access Center (BAC) so New Yorkers can access various city resources and benefits at a centralized location.

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