

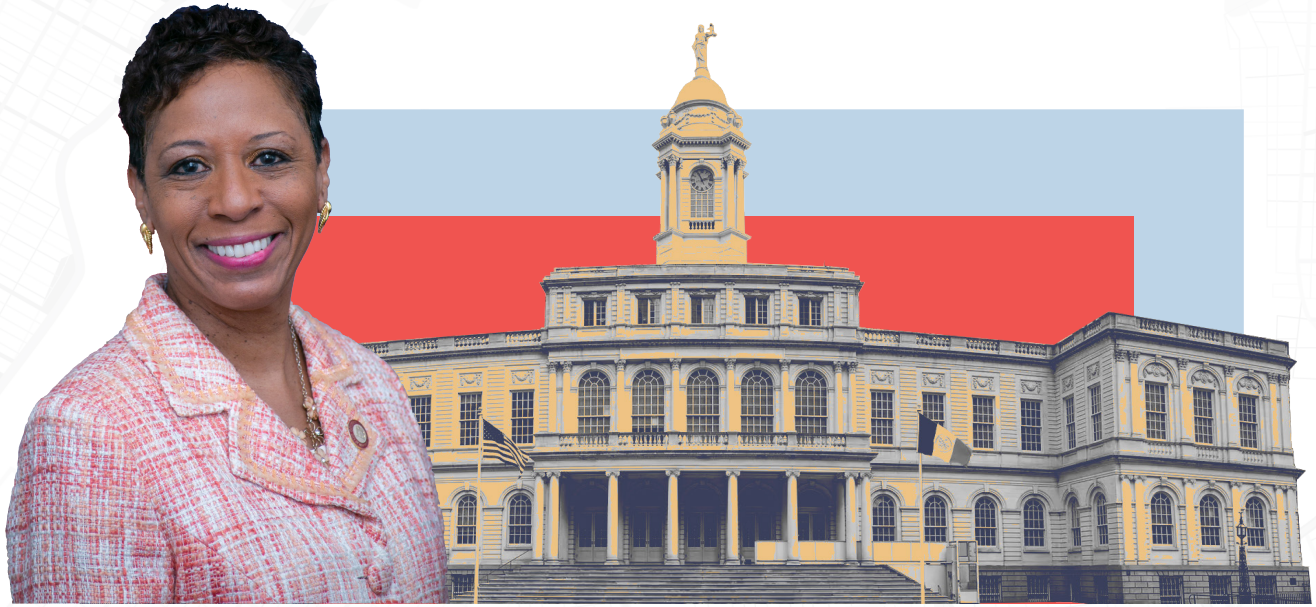


NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER
ADRIENNE E. ADAMS

2023 State City OF THE

**PEOPLE OVER
EVERYTHING**





Introduction

New York City is home to over 8.8 million residents, who contribute to our city as artists, educators, social workers, small business owners, and so much more. Whether lifelong New Yorkers, immigrants, transplants who arrived from other states, or recent migrants seeking asylum, the shared joys and struggles we uniquely experience as New Yorkers unite us. For us to succeed, we must build a city that works for everyone and that requires prioritizing our people over everything.

New Yorkers need access to economic mobility through jobs and entrepreneurship, affordable housing, and community investments that make our neighborhoods healthy and safe.

Our city has been built and sustained by workers. It was our essential workers, serving on the frontlines, who helped us endure the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite immense risks to themselves, their families, and loved ones. It's time we show our gratitude to the people and workers of our city by advancing the policies and investments that ensure New York City is a place where everyone can thrive.

We need to deliver the fundamentals: economic mobility, housing, and healthier and safer neighborhoods. New Yorkers are the City's greatest assets, and we must invest in them.

Our success hinges on advancing solutions for New Yorkers whose needs have too often been marginalized. When we respond through this lens of equity, all New Yorkers win. Expanding equitable access to opportunities to include our historically underserved communities is an investment in the success of everyone in our city.

To be successful, we must center the needs of women, who make up 60% of our city's frontline workforce, and people of color, who are three out of every four frontline workers. As the first women-majority and most diverse Council in history, we are transforming the decades-old approach of government that excluded too many of us, to one that centers everyone's needs.

It is time that our vision and our investments are aimed at the people whose work improves our lives and city.

We can help the people of our city reach success when we focus on their needs as workers, entrepreneurs, students, parents, families and communities.

By working together to deliver for workers, families and communities across every borough, New York City can be a lighthouse for progress.

Sincerely,


Speaker Adrienne E. Adams

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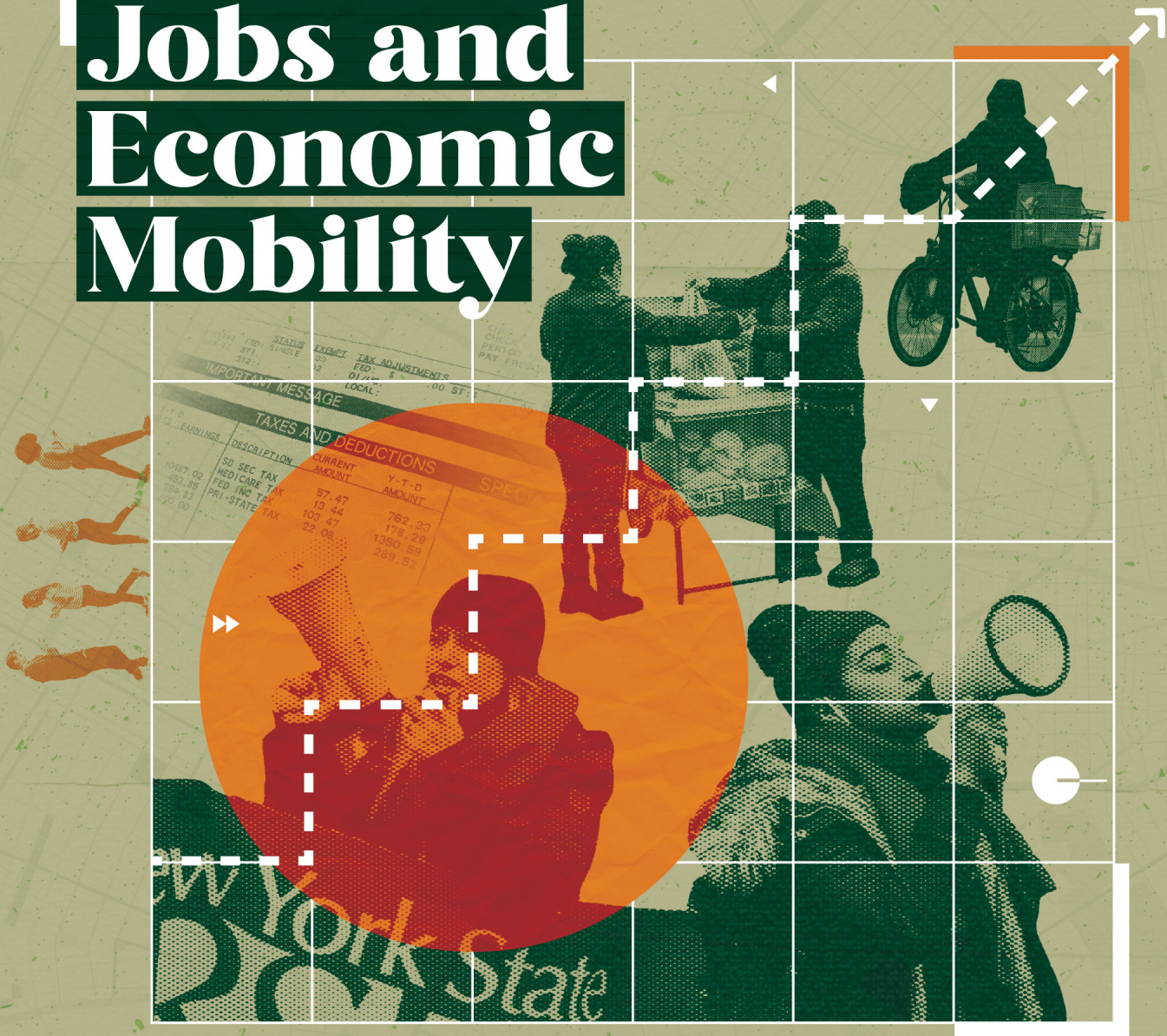
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Jobs and Economic Mobility



Jobs and Economic Mobility

Support for our city's workforce, entrepreneurs and small business owners is essential to expanding economic mobility for more New Yorkers through many diverse pathways. The City must fill understaffed public service roles that provide critical services to New Yorkers, leveraging the job opportunities to employ New Yorkers in need of employment. The City can also direct strategic economic development in the long-neglected industrial sector to expand opportunity and meet citywide needs for jobs, manufactured goods, and green energy. City investment in underrepresented entrepreneurs and small businesses, who can enhance our city, but lack access to business development opportunities, can provide equitable access to those enterprises that have too often been overlooked. By removing barriers and providing targeted support to foster economic mobility, the City can unlock new opportunities that help more New Yorkers reach their full potential, strengthening our workforce, economy and communities.

Expanding Civil & Public Service Employment

For years, civil service careers have been a pathway to the middle class and economic stability for New Yorkers, particularly those in Black and Latino communities. That link has weakened over time, and the City's workforce has diminished over the past several years, resulting in under-staffed city agencies unable to adequately deliver essential services. The City's broader public service-oriented workforce, such as nurses, mental health workers, public defenders and housing attorneys, has experience shortages. In the past year, the Council has advanced legislative efforts to expand civil service pipelines and address pay disparities in the human services and municipal workforces, but additional efforts are needed to strengthen our city's workforce.

The Council will:

- Advocate for budget investments in key agency front-line positions that serve New Yorkers and expedite agencies' abilities to effectively hire.
- Partner with Mayor Adams' administration to hold hiring events across the City to connect New Yorkers to city jobs that fill agency staff vacancies.
- Collaborate with municipal labor unions and the mayoral administration to identify jobs that no longer require college degrees and other unnecessary qualifications, passing legislation that opens more civil service jobs to New Yorkers.
- Advance legislation requiring the City to establish an education campaign for people with expiring temporary work contracts to move into permanent roles within key City agencies.
- Support additional resources and pipeline programs for public service occupations with staffing shortages, such as mental health workers, nurses, public defenders, and civil legal services attorneys.
 - Increase city and state resources for public defenders and civil legal service attorneys to hire and provide salary increases to implement discovery laws, address court delays, and ensure legal representation in housing court and immigration proceedings.

- o Support state’s “Nurses for Our Future” fellowship program to increase our frontline healthcare workforce through tuition subsidies for nursing degrees.
- o Establish “Social Worker Fellows” program to cover tuition for those pursuing social work degrees who provide mental health services in public institutions, such as schools.
- o Explore affordable housing lottery preferences for “hard-to-fill” public service jobs, including nurses, public-serving mental health workers, public defenders and civil legal service attorneys.

Expanding CUNY Reconnect and Investments in CUNY

For decades, the City University of New York (CUNY) has been a beacon of economic opportunity and mobility for New Yorkers, particularly among communities of color, immigrants, and low-income and working people. Yet, increasing tuition costs, enrollment declines, and inadequate support for the public colleges and universities can undermine CUNY’s central role as an incubator of opportunity for New Yorkers.

In last year’s State of the City address, Speaker Adams proposed CUNY Reconnect, an initiative to help working-age New Yorkers – the vast majority of whom are Black and Latina women – re-enroll in CUNY to finish their college degrees and advance their economic opportunities. The Council allocated \$4.4 million in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget to start the initiative. In its first few months of operation, CUNY Reconnect has already surpassed its initial goal of reaching 10,000 New Yorkers. In fact, CUNY has welcomed back over 16,500 returning students, of which 60% are women and 82% are Black, Latino, or AAPI New Yorkers..

To expand on this accomplishment and CUNY’s essential role, Speaker Adams proposes deeper investments to expand CUNY Reconnect and increase support for CUNY. CUNY institutions must continue as engines of opportunity and hubs for workforce development, which is only possible with increased city and state investments. Access to our public colleges and universities should not be undermined by reduced government support and tuition increases. The Council will prioritize protecting and expanding CUNY funding in the city and state budgets.

Expanding Workforce Development for Disconnected Youth

The number of out-of-school/out-of-work (OSOW) young people in New York City had been decreasing for a decade before the COVID-19 pandemic threatened this progress, falling from 197,000 in 2010 to 117,000 in 2018. As of 2018, more than one in eight New Yorkers between the ages of 16 and 24 were out of school or out of work. The pandemic’s impact on jobs threatened progress for this age group the most. In New York City, the negative effect on young workers in this age group was worse than anywhere across the country. Last year, New York City youth faced an unemployment rate of 17.9 percent and a labor force participation rate of 43.6 percent, compared to 8.3 percent and 56 percent nationally. Black and Latino youth make up 75 percent of the OSOW population in New York City and are concentrated in low-income communities. This disconnection often carries significant long-term negative effects on economic and health outcomes.

Speaker Adams and the Council will expand the Renaissance Technical Institute's (RTI) program that provides free vocational training to young people, particularly disconnected youth, at-risk students, or justice-involved young people. Since its creation in 2016, the organization has graduated over 435 students trained in carpentry, plumbing, solar panel installation, security, and other vocational trades. While the non-profit organization has the capacity to serve more participants, it has lacked the funding and space to help the thousands on its waiting list, operating only out of NYCHA's Johnson Houses in East Harlem.

To expand the reach of RTI's workforce development programs for young people, the Council will invest \$5.7 million to support the expansion of workforce development programs for youth in more communities throughout New York City. The program will expand to NYCHA's Sedgwick Houses in the Bronx, Red Hook Houses in Brooklyn, and South Jamaica Houses in Queens. By extending workforce development opportunities to more young people, we can increase access to economic mobility and help break cycles of poverty, recidivism, and lack of opportunity in neighborhoods.

Removing Barriers to Job Opportunities

To help provide all New Yorkers with equitable access to opportunities for entering the city's workforce, the City must focus on support for homeless, low-income, and justice-involved New Yorkers.

The Council will:

- Fight to secure dedicated funding in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for a training and apprenticeship support program that funds organizations providing childcare, eldercare, and transportation support for people enrolled in apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Pass legislation prohibiting non-compete agreements for all workers, including low-wage workers, so people can pursue better employment opportunities that increase their wages.
- Pass legislation to pilot a resident training academy in at least one men's homeless shelter and one family or women's homeless shelter, requiring the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to work with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to place trainees of these academies in municipal jobs with high demand.
- Pass legislation to increase access to civil service careers for New Yorkers in correctional facilities and other systems by administering civil service exams and providing information about upcoming exam opportunities to justice-involved individuals.

Prioritizing Industrial Development for Jobs, Manufacturing, and Green Energy

New York City's industrial businesses are an invaluable source of mid-to-high wage jobs that have low barriers of entry – many do not require a college degree. Eighty percent of the industrial workforce is made up of people of color, making the sector a pathway to achieve equitable access to economic mobility. Expanding this sector and connecting more New Yorkers to entrepreneurship and jobs within it would be a boon to the city's economy and economic equity. Yet, the City has lacked a coherent economic development strategy to cultivate industrial growth.

Speaker Adams and the Council propose a comprehensive approach to support industrial development through coordinated land use, planning, and economic development strategies that includes:

- Comprehensive reform of the city's outdated 1961 manufacturing zoning in the upcoming "Zoning for Economic Opportunity" text amendment to foster industrial economic development, protecting industrial areas from commercial intrusions that undermine the sector's ability to meet the city's economic, employment, and environmental needs.
- Calling for the City and State to advance a coordinated economic development strategy that invests in attracting and retaining industrial businesses in New York City, beginning with the City devoting adequate resources at the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to connect businesses with incentives and workforce development programs.
- Identifying industrial sites in outer-borough neighborhoods that can provide space to cultivate industrial business growth and entrepreneurship opportunities. For example, in Southeast Queens, the 15-acre industrial site that was once home to Elmhurst Dairy has been vacant and unused for several years. Located in the Jamaica Industrial Business Zone (IBZ), the site's proximity to Downtown Jamaica and CUNY's York College presents a major opportunity for industrial job growth and workforce development. Working together with the State and the private property owner, the City can reactivate sites like this with a job-intensive industrial use that also helps fulfill citywide manufacturing or green energy needs.
- Increasing and baselining funding for Industrial Business Service Providers – the community development non-profits that do the essential on-the-ground work of connecting businesses with incentives and workforce development. Small businesses need these local partners to provide the capacity to engage with city programs.
- Advancing legislation to require citywide study for siting industrial businesses and facilities necessary to transition the city away from fossil fuels towards green energy.
- Advancing legislation to require the creation of Economic Development Action Plans for industrial areas to support job growth and meet other citywide needs.
- Continuing investments in City-owned industrial campuses, like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn Army Terminal, South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, and Hunts Point Terminal Market, with a focus on expanding equitable opportunities for underserved communities and good-paying jobs for New Yorkers.

Supporting M/WBEs and Underrepresented Entrepreneurs

Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) continue to lack access to business opportunities, including contracting with the city, while entrepreneurs in underserved communities struggle to access support that helps transform their ventures into successful businesses. The challenges they face include a lack of access to capital from traditional banks and business development support.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), whose mission is to advance equitable lending, help extend economic opportunities in low-income and under-resourced communities that have been historically excluded from traditional financial institutions. Despite their work to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, not enough of these entrepreneurs know about the value CDFIs can provide to support the development of their businesses.

To increase support for M/WBEs and entrepreneurs, the Council will:

- Pass legislation requiring the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to set up and host a central portal for all New York City-based CDFIs, and run an educational campaign targeted at certified M/WBEs about the importance of CDFIs and the resources they can provide.
- Provide funding to support CDFIs' outreach and business development efforts targeted for M/WBEs and entrepreneurs in underrepresented communities and with past justice-system involvement.
- Work closely with The Black Institute to convene CDFIs and connect them with underrepresented M/WBEs and entrepreneurs

There used to be over 1,000 newsstands in New York City, but the number has declined to just over 300. Their operation once provided economic opportunities for many immigrants and veterans, but the decline in newspaper sales and the excessive limitations on what they can sell has undermined their potential. Currently, newsstands cannot sell any items above \$10, limiting the economic opportunity they can provide to operators.

The Council will pursue reforms to outdated laws that restrict these opportunities for their immigrant operators, including:

- Passing legislation that changes regulations to allow newsstands to sell more items and expand the price limit for items that can be sold above the current \$10 threshold.
- Passing legislation to provide the City with a more complete picture of the landscape of newsstands and their success, including how many exist and how many newsstands are awaiting approval.

Expanding NYCHA Resident-Owned Businesses

Over 1,600 NYCHA residents reported owning their own small businesses in 2021, which represents a near 500% increase since 2012. Yet, research shows there are far more residents whose businesses are informal and unregistered because of barriers to formalization. These include a lack of access to capital and technical support, as well as NYCHA's low utilization of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program that helps residents save money without increasing their rent and cost-of-living. Public housing residents in New York City have the talent and entrepreneurial spirit, but lack the support and resources to successfully start or formalize their businesses.

To focus the City's efforts in supporting these entrepreneurs and expanding the number of tenant business owners, the Council will:

- Advance legislation requiring the creation of a business directory of NYCHA tenant-owned businesses and a marketing campaign to highlight them.
- Consider legislation requiring a public education campaign targeted at NYCHA residents to highlight the opportunities available at small business incubators and implement incubators at NYCHA facilities in each borough.
- Advance legislation requiring SBS to expand its Business Pathways programs beyond catering and childcare to include creative fields, retail, cosmetology, and others periodically identified as of interest to NYCHA residents.
- Advocate for NYCHA and EDC to identify vacant spaces appropriate for commercial pop-ups and business incubators, and to develop a program that makes these available to NYCHA entrepreneurs.
- Conduct oversight that requires the City and NYCHA to report on tenant participation in the Family Self Sufficiency Program, and advocate for an education campaign targeted at NYCHA residents that highlights the benefits of this program.
- Advocate for EDC to provide micro-grants as part of its Neighborhood Credits program.
- Collaborate with private partners to launch a NYCHA business competition that provides business development support, networking opportunities, and awards for entrepreneurs.
- Invest in worker cooperatives at NYCHA.
- Provide funding for workforce training programs at NYCHA to include entrepreneurship programming.

Fair Housing



Fair Housing

New York City faces a dire housing crisis that is disproportionately burdening low-income and working families and exacerbating homelessness. While the city is growing in population and jobs, available homes and housing production have fallen behind dramatically, resulting in a housing shortage. As a result, competition for affordable housing is fierce and rents continue to reach record highs. The New York Times recently reported that over the last two decades, the city's Black population has decreased by almost 10 percent, driven out by skyrocketing rent prices and the increasingly elusive dream of owning a home. This exodus is deeply concerning, and illustrates the need to confront our housing and opportunity crisis that is costing the city its diversity.

In December 2022, Speaker Adams released "A Housing Agenda to Confront the City's Crisis," which details actionable steps to increase housing production with a focus on equity, deepening affordability, preservation, and restoring capacity for housing agencies and staff. As part of affordable housing preservation, the City must also address the poor conditions within NYCHA developments.

Safeguarding Public Housing with New Model for NYCHA

Decades of federal disinvestment and underinvestment at all levels of government, along with agency mismanagement, have resulted in public housing residents living in unacceptable conditions. Residents endure heat and gas outages, impermissible lead levels, and other issues from buildings in severe disrepair. As the capital repair needs of NYCHA's buildings exceed \$40 billion and continue to grow, several new efforts have been undertaken to address the quality and sustainability of our public housing. These programs rely on converting NYCHA units, known as Section 9, to Section 8 units, and have faced mixed reactions from public housing residents.

The deterioration of some NYCHA buildings has reached a level where renovation would be insufficient to achieve the housing conditions that residents deserve. NYCHA requires increased funding from every level of government. In addition, Speaker Adams is proposing an innovative solution for residents and all public housing stakeholders to consider in order to improve tenants' living conditions and the sustainability of public housing. It can only be tenant-driven and could be an option to consider as a pilot program, if desired by residents.

Speaker Adams' proposed idea for consideration would consist of:

- Combining all existing city, state and federal financing tools within a single newly developed NYCHA building to provide new Section 9 units for existing public housing residents living within a development.
- Constructing new mixed-income buildings on the open land of a NYCHA development to include new Section 9 public housing apartments for every existing resident of old buildings.
- Section 9 NYCHA units would continue to be owned by NYCHA, and the building would include additional city and state-funded affordable and mixed income units.
- Ground floor usage could include community spaces, healthcare centers, supermarkets, childcare centers, or other commercial uses.

- The development would be phased, starting with construction of a new building and then relocation of all existing NYCHA residents into their new Section 9 homes. Then, one option could allow the old vacant building to be reconstructed for a new higher-density mixed income development that would again provide for new Section 9 public housing units, along with other affordable and mixed income housing that increases the City's affordable housing supply.
- The higher density buildings that include both public and private housing will take advantage of a fuller set of existing housing financing sources that spread out construction costs and help support overall building maintenance.
- This model is new, and NYCHA has not constructed any new Section 9 public housing units. This would also be the first time Section 9, affordable, and mixed income housing would all be done all within the same newly constructed building.

Rather than simply continuing to pour money into renovations for a building that may be beyond repair and provides no significant improvement in tenants' living conditions, the idea could begin to put our public housing stock on firmer ground for future generations. Increased resources for NYCHA developments would still be required from the city, state and federal governments beyond such a proposal. Yet, NYCHA could focus its renovation resources on buildings to substantially improve living conditions for residents. The proposal aims to preserve public ownership of public housing and provide existing NYCHA residents with safe, quality homes, while increasing the city's affordable housing stock. Furthermore, this program would allow NYCHA campuses to have new modern amenities, not just in the apartments but available to the entire building and campus. The open spaces on NYCHA campuses could also be redesigned through a tenant-driven process.

Advancing a Fair Housing Framework Law

Last year, the Council passed over 40 land use projects to create more than 12,000 units of housing, more than 60 percent of which will be affordable. However, housing production must be increased fairly and responsibly to meet the scale of the city's housing crisis. The Council will introduce a legislation establishing a citywide Fair Housing Framework that creates community district-level targets for housing production, preservation, voucher use, and neighborhood investment. This will help increase housing production and ensure every community equitably contributes to affordable housing production. The Fair Housing Framework be based on several factors, including access to opportunity (jobs, economic development, etc.), services, infrastructure capacity, and displacement risk. This legislation will ensure that all neighborhoods throughout New York City address the city's housing crisis, while delivering investments for the most vulnerable communities.

Increasing Affordable Housing Production through Citywide Zoning

The City intends to pursue a citywide zoning text amendment to increase affordable housing – “Zoning for Housing Opportunity” – that can be a critical tool to address the widest gaps in our housing supply. Specifically, the housing shortage in New York City is greatest for apartments at the deepest levels of affordability.

Speaker Adams proposes several concrete actions that the Council will pursue within this process to increase more deeply affordable housing:

- Continued state advocacy to eliminate the 12 FAR cap to increase density in parts of the City, and pursuing a new city-level framework that utilizes Mandatory Inclusionary Housing to direct more affordable housing in these areas where restrictions currently exist.
- A proposal to allow for reasonable increased density in development beyond what certain types of current zoning permits if it provides housing at deep affordability levels for people with annual incomes of \$56,000 on average and below. In many parts of New York City, overly restrictive zoning limits the City's ability to produce affordable housing for New Yorkers, which only deepens our housing crisis and increases the cost of apartments.
- A proposal to update Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) to deepen affordability, reflecting the rapid inflation of Area Median Incomes (AMI) during the last decade that has outpaced actual income inflation. It would require the deeply affordable option of MIH (Option 3) and increase the proportion of units dedicated to the lowest-income households – earning incomes of \$48,000 on average and below - from 20 percent to 25 percent. This would be contingent on the state providing the necessary affordable housing credits to facilitate its development in New York City.

Strengthening Housing Preservation

While equitable housing production is critical, the City cannot overlook the importance of strengthening its preservation of existing affordable housing stock, including rent-regulated units.

The Council will:

- Advocate to expand funding and improve the effectiveness of existing programs within the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), including the "Neighborhood Pillars" and "Landlord Ambassador" programs for renters and the "HomeFix" and Homeowner Help Desk programs for small homeowners.
- Pursue budget, legislative and policy solutions at the city-level and work with our state government partners to address the issue of vacant public housing and rent-stabilized units.
- Increase community-based ownership and participation by exploring expanded use of community land trusts and other social housing tools. HDFCs and land trusts can increasingly be used to expand affordable homeownership, similar to a project Speaker Adams helped finance to construct affordable homes through a transfer of distressed property in HPD's Open Door program. It was the first construction of affordable homes through land transferred to the Interboro Community Land Trust, providing lasting affordable homeownership opportunities to sixteen low-to-middle income households, and can be replicated.
- Continue to advance legislation and oversight related to improving housing quality by ensuring housing developers adequately maintain properties that receive public financing, strengthen compliance for housing violations, and address the presence of lead paint in apartments.

- Partner with the state to advance efforts that establish new regulations and fund programs that can make existing basement apartments safe and sustainable.

Expanding Affordable Homeownership Opportunities

The dream of homeownership must be within reach for families who want to build their legacy in New York City. According to a 2022 report by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, New York has the lowest homeownership rates among the states. Only 53.6% of New Yorkers own a home, compared to 65.8% nationally.

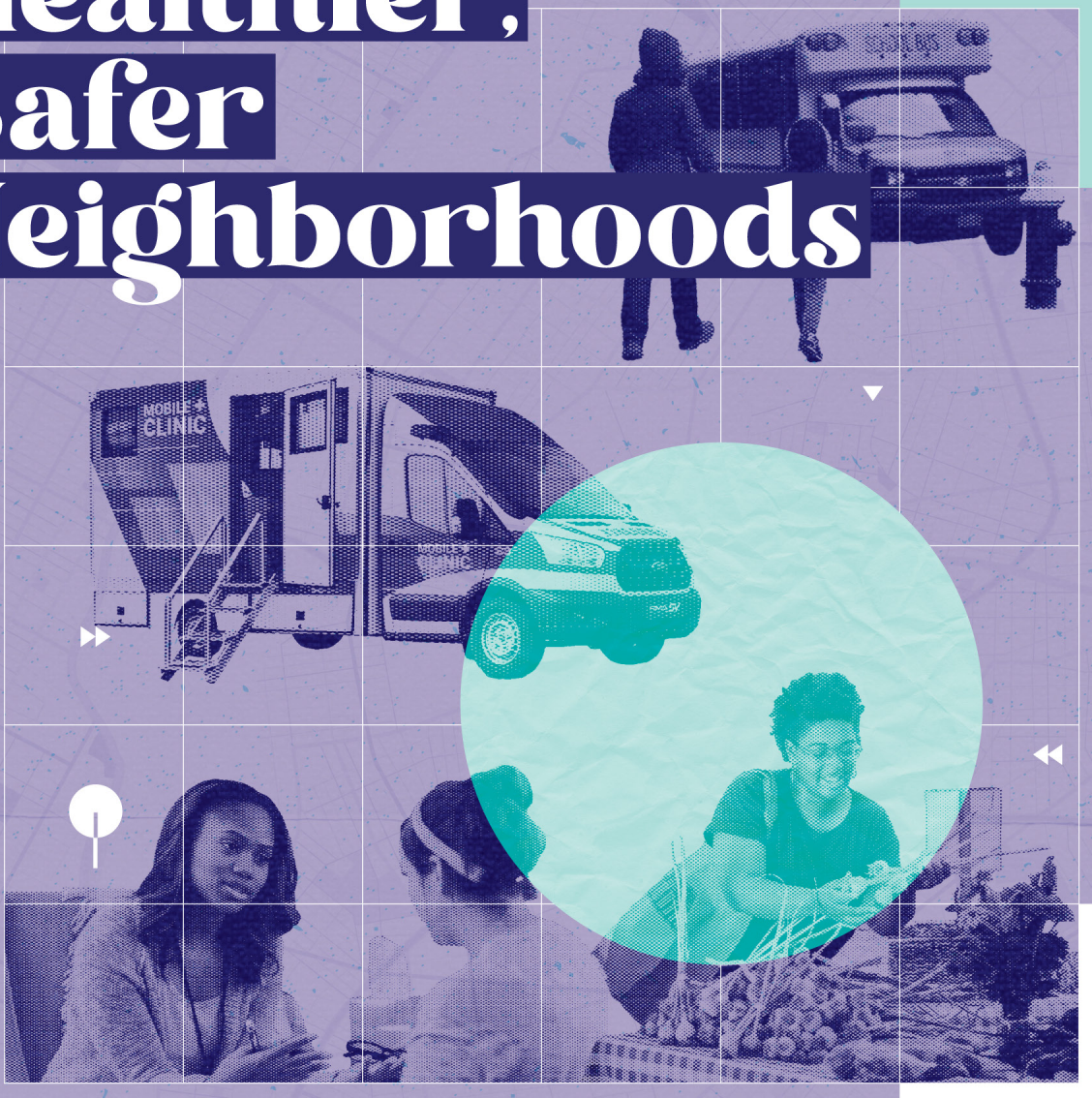
To expand affordable homeownership opportunities, the Council will:

- Advocate for adjusting HPD's Open Door Program to target families earning less than \$100,000 per year with expanded down payment assistance.
- Work with the State to fund a new initiative, modeled on the Mitchell Lama program, that grows affordable homeownership through large-scale development of limited equity co-ops, given HPD's current financing tools are inadequate.
- Partner with CDFIs to connect more New Yorkers with resources and access to capital that can help them pursue affordable homeownership opportunities.

Fixing Inefficient Access to CityFHEPS Housing Vouchers

The City's housing voucher program, City Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS), is vital to helping keep New Yorkers in their homes and move unhoused New Yorkers out of shelters into permanent homes. As of March 2023, more than 70,500 New Yorkers reside in the city's homeless shelter system, including nearly 23,000 children, underscoring the important need for the successful implementation of CityFHEPS. However, bureaucratic obstacles and inefficient administration of this program has resulted in unnecessary and costly delays that prevent New Yorkers from accessing the support they need. The Council will advance legislation to remove the bureaucratic inefficiencies that block access to housing vouchers, ensuring more New Yorkers avoid eviction to remain in their homes and can transition from the shelter system into permanent housing.

Healthier, Safer Neighborhoods



Healthier, Safer Neighborhoods

Health, safety, and opportunity have been the hallmarks of our city's first women-majority City Council, and improving the health and safety of our neighborhoods is critical to increasing opportunity for all New Yorkers. Too many communities currently lack access to the basic support services they need to thrive. The City must begin to address long-standing inequities that undermine the health and safety of our neighborhoods through the improvement of current programs and systems, and the implementation of new ideas.

Advancing Guaranteed Income Programs to Fight Poverty for New Yorkers

For New Yorkers who face the greatest hardships and challenges, the challenge of securing basic needs makes it even more difficult for them to access economic opportunities that can ultimately help them attain stability and mobility. By providing life-stabilizing financial assistance to people who need it the most, the City can have an outsized impact on their health and well-being, reducing poverty.

The Council will help expand several guaranteed income programs that provide direct anti-poverty assistance payments to low-income mothers with infants and to vulnerable youth – those at risk of poverty due to engagement with the foster or justice systems.

The Council will build on existing efforts, committing \$5 million towards the expansion of these anti-poverty programs and advancing legislation to ensure city government supports their impact and success. It will work closely with the Bridge Project, Children's Defense Fund, Chapin Hall, and other organizations administering guaranteed income programs for vulnerable New Yorkers. Fostering the expansion of guaranteed income programs will help New Yorkers gain stability by meeting their most immediate needs, so they can access the economic opportunities that can help them advance in their lives.

Expanding Fair Fares to More Low-income New Yorkers

In 2019, the New York City Council launched Fair Fares, a program that offers a 50 percent discount on the city's subways and buses for New Yorkers with incomes up to 100% of the federal poverty level. More than 280,000 New Yorkers have enrolled in Fair Fares, but the program can reach many more people who rely on public transit to access opportunity. According to the Community Service Society's Unheard Third Survey, one in three New Yorkers with incomes between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level struggle to pay for transit.

The Council will push to expand eligibility of Fair Fares to New Yorkers with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level, which will allow nearly 1.7 million working-age New Yorkers with low-incomes to qualify. Expanding eligibility and enrollment in Fair Fares can boost access to opportunity for New Yorkers and ridership for the MTA, which has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Fixing the City's 3-K and Early Childhood Education Programs

Early childhood education programs, like 3-K, are one of the best investments we can make in our city's families. They are key to the long-term cognitive and educational development of our children and allow working parents to advance their careers and participation in the workforce, especially women who disproportionately shoulder caregiving responsibilities. However, the current system has been weakened by bureaucratic challenges and a lack of focused support. It is critical for families across the five boroughs that we fix the issues in the system that are undermining 3-K and our early childhood education programs.

The Council is pursuing the following reforms and solutions:

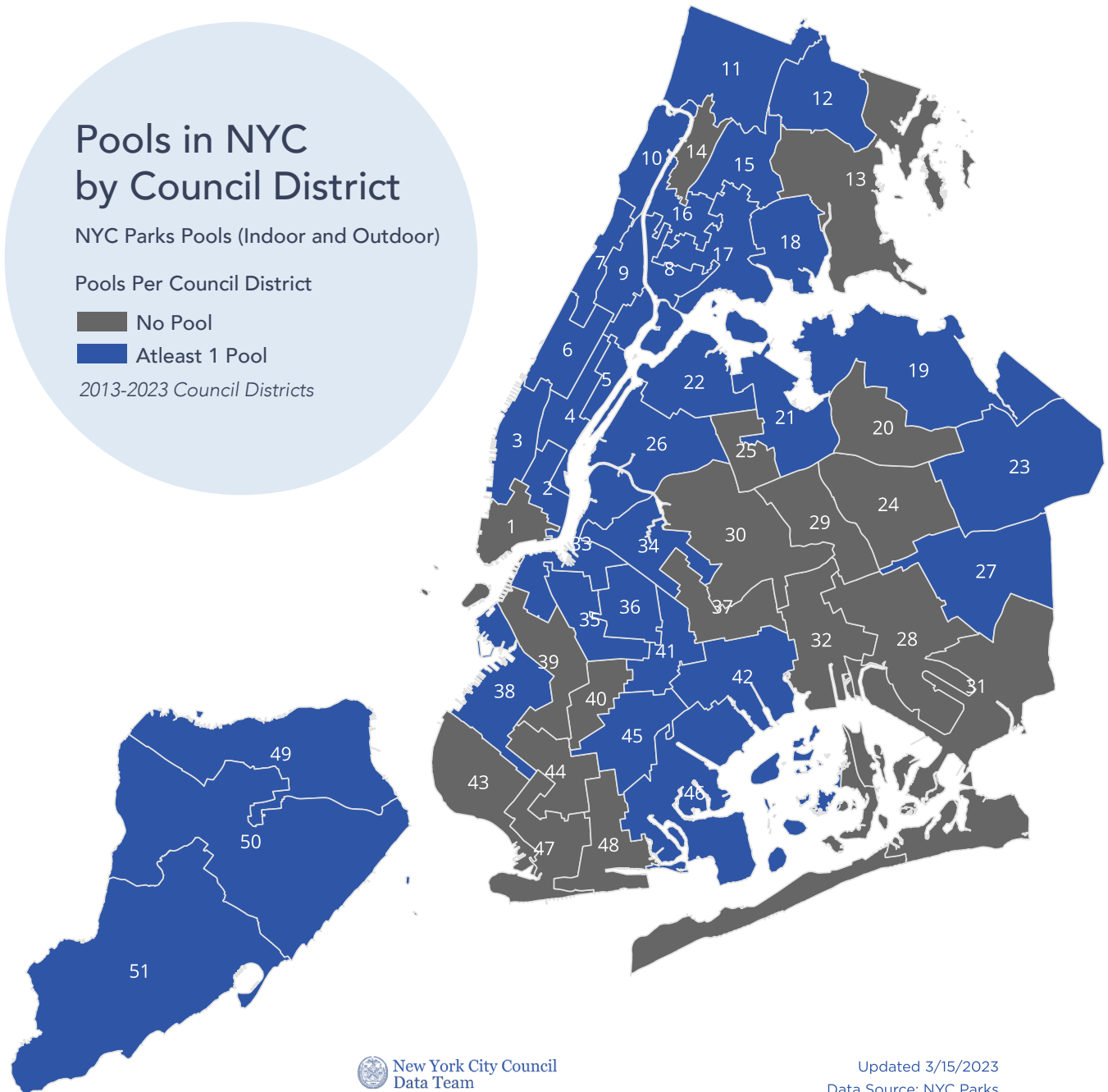
- The Department of Education (DOE) to fill the lost capacity in its Early Childhood Education division and immediately reimburse providers to address the late contract payments that have undermined programs.
- DOE to revamp and expand 3-K with a newly designed contract that includes access to Extended Day/Extended Year slots, which are critical for working families who do not have the flexibility to pick up their children in the middle of the workday.
- Improve salary parity between the workforce in community-based organization (CBO) settings and their counterparts in DOE 3-K and Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) settings
- Develop a two-pronged enrollment system that allows parents the option of enrolling in programs directly through CBOs or through DOE, giving more agency to families and entrusting them to make the best decision for their children.
- Ensure preschoolers with disabilities receive their mandated classes and services.
- Ensure the distribution of early childhood care and education seats addresses high-needs communities, and "service deserts."
- Invest in an extensive multi-lingual and culturally competent outreach campaign to inform families about their options and improve enrollment.

Creating Year-Round Public Pool Access and Expanding Free Swimming Programs

Our city's pools and beaches are a source of relief in the summertime, recreation for countless families, and seasonal jobs that spur our local economy. However, not all of the city's residents have access to public pools, which has hampered their ability to swim. According to a 2017 survey by the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 27.5% of New Yorkers 18 years old or younger cannot swim. Nearly one in three Black and Asian students, and one in four Latino students, cannot swim. Altogether, 16 Council districts in New York City have no access to a public pool.

The City must address these disparities and the Council will:

- Advance legislation requiring the Parks Department and DOE to develop a plan to make school pools accessible to the public year-round, offer free swimming lessons at City pools, and identify locations for new city pools in environmental justice communities.
- Coordinate with community-based organizations and fund free swimming programs in the budget that help keep New Yorkers safe, support healthy recreation, and open potential pathways to lifeguard training for those interested in pursuing such jobs.



Developing New Mobile Healthcare Hubs for Deliveristas

The Council will partner with Los Deliveristas Unidos/Worker's Justice Project to establish new mobile healthcare hubs that deliver healthcare services directly to delivery workers. Based on a model used by NYC Health + Hospitals, the mobile healthcare units will expand access to care at deliveristas hubs and public locations where delivery workers gather. The Council has supported past projects that provide additional resources and spaces for delivery workers to recharge and rest.

Addressing Food Access and Insecurity

Food insecurity has been worsened by the de-stabilizing impacts of the pandemic. More than one million New York City residents struggle with hunger, and with federal pandemic-era benefits expiring, more New Yorkers will struggle to put enough food on the table every day.

The Council will focus on the following efforts:

- Expand funding for mobile markets and fresh food box programs, and other programs that increase NYCHA residents' access to fresh and healthy food.
- Advance legislation requiring the Office of Food Policy to develop a plan to winterize farmers' markets in every borough to ensure they benefit residents year-round. These changes will help New Yorkers struggling with food insecurity and deliver relief directly to their neighborhoods.
- Advocate for HRA to fill staff vacancies that ensure SNAP enrollment and benefits are processed in a timely fashion, and ensure these positions are a priority in the budget.
- Collaborate with the DOE to ensure summer meals sites are available in every Council District, and to maximize utilization through community outreach.

Confronting the Overdose Crisis

The number of drug overdose deaths in New York City has risen to record highs since the start of the pandemic, with a disproportionate impact in Black and brown communities. The City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported more than 2,600 drug overdose deaths in 2021, representing a 78% increase since 2019. Black New Yorkers experienced the highest rate of overdose deaths.

To address this crisis holistically, the City must prioritize prevention, treatment, and harm reduction efforts at the community level. The Council will partner with the mayoral administration and state to expand harm reduction programs, specifically access to Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) that can save lives.

Charting a Roadmap to Mental Health

The pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis in New York City, underscoring the need to provide comprehensive mental health services for all New Yorkers. Working closely with Council Member Linda Lee, Chair of the Council's Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions, Speaker Adams and the Council will lay out a mental health roadmap that advances the health and well-being of New Yorkers. The roadmap will advocate for specific investments at the state level to

increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for mental health, supportive housing, and the mental health workforce, along with greater investments in community-based care and mental health workforce expansion at the city level.

Prioritizing Equitable Street Safety Resources

Last year was a deadly year for traffic violence on city streets. 255 people died in traffic, a slight decrease from 2021 but higher than any other year since the start of the City's "Vision Zero" efforts to eliminate traffic deaths. This includes 114 pedestrians and 17 cyclists — and 16 children, the highest rate of death in nine years.

The Council will advocate for more equitable and increased investments in the city budget for street safety infrastructure for communities most impacted by traffic violence pursuing daylighting and other traffic calming measures.

Elevating Proven Community Safety Investments

Public safety is one of government's most important responsibilities. New Yorkers, especially in communities of color, have disproportionately endured concentrated violence and its resulting trauma, but too often have lacked access to the services that help them recover. The Council has focused on proven safety solutions that prevent violence before it occurs in communities and stop cycles of violence.

Last year, a new Speaker's Initiative for Community Safety and Victim Services provided \$100,000 to each Council district to support community safety and victim services. The Council also helped establish New York State's first trauma recovery center in our city to support recovery for underserved crime victims and communities. Additionally, the city's legislative body increased funding for hate crime prevention and responses at the community level, in response to increased incidents targeting AAPI, Jewish and LGBTQIA+ communities.

The Council will continue to focus on advocating and investing in prevention and proven safety solutions that expand our public safety infrastructure for more appropriate responses, while holding all city agencies accountable for their role in achieving equitable public safety outcomes.

Renewing the Commitment to Close Rikers with Action

In 2019, the New York City Council approved a plan to close the jail facilities on Rikers Island and shift to a borough-based jail system by 2027. Since the earliest days of the pandemic the situation at Rikers has only worsened. The jail population has increased, with people detained spending longer periods of time in custody. More than half of New Yorkers detained in our jail system have a mental health diagnosis and the number of those with a serious mental health diagnosis has risen in the last year. Conditions at Rikers have reached crisis levels and are a stain on the City, harming both detainees and staff. In 2022, 19 people who were detained in our system died while in city custody – the most deaths in the past decade. The City must not continue exposing those working and detained at Rikers to this continued violence and trauma that maintains cycles of violence rather than interrupting them.

The Council will prioritize efforts to advance a reinvigorated plan towards the closure of Rikers that addresses recent conditions and facilitates movement towards a safer, more effective model that focuses on prevention, rehabilitation, re-entry, and safety efforts at the scale necessary.

This includes the following efforts:

- Ensure people with mental health conditions are no longer warehoused in jails by expanding mental health diversion with state legislation and increased city and state resources to increase utilization of mental health courts and treatment programs, so people with mental health challenges access the healthcare necessary to avoid entering and cycling through the justice system.
- Increase investments and utilization in pre-trial and alternative-to-incarceration programs that reduce recidivism through funding and training of decision-makers in the legal system.
- Expand and improve evidence-based re-entry initiatives and programs that help people transition from the justice system to stability and opportunity, including supportive housing units for justice-involved New Yorkers that are proven to reduce recidivism, employment opportunities that provide pathways to success, and wrap-around services that address basic needs.
- Advance more effective models and vision for borough-based jail system through oversight, budget, legislative, and policy efforts.
- Invest additional resources for opportunity programs and social services in communities where the new borough-based jails are located, and where the majority of the jail population derives, to improve safety and reduce recidivism.

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