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**CITY TO INVEST \$3 MILLION PER YEAR IN SERVICES TO REDUCE THE
NUMBER OF TEENS IN CITY CUSTODY**

Programs aim to further decrease the number of 16- and 17-year-olds in City custody, which is down nearly 48 percent since December 2013

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio announced a \$3 million annual investment to provide an array of services to young people that will help safely drive down the number of teenagers in city custody and advance the City’s commitment to provide young people in trouble with high quality programming that addresses underlying issues in their lives.

“Diverting teens from the justice system means making sure they’re getting the services they need to turn their lives around and taking a holistic approach that addresses the underlying issues in their lives. There are roughly half as many 16- and 17-year-olds in City custody than in 2013, and we’re investing in programs that have the potential to put even more young people on better paths toward brighter futures,” said **Mayor de Blasio**.

The City’s new recurring annual investment of \$3 million will support a variety of strategies, including:

- **Two new programs that will prevent young people from entering jail.** Instead of detaining young people, judges will have new options to release young people to community-based programs including:
 - **Family therapy:** The program will use a unique, evidence-driven model that provides support and therapy not just for the young person, but also for his or her entire family. In this way, the program will ensure that the young person has a network of support to build a productive future;
 - **Intensive mentoring:** New to New York City, this program will offer young people multiple years of intensive mentorship and social work support, along with opportunities for job readiness training, paid internships, and career development. Intended to serve young people at the highest risk of justice involvement, this program will also allow referrals from police, prosecutors, and others.
- **Expansion of a program that reduces how long young people stay in city custody:**

- **In-court case expediting:** The City is investing in in-court staff to ensure young people's cases move fairly and efficiently through the court system.
- **Advocacy for earlier release to community programming:** The City will expand a program that pairs detained young people with social workers who can facilitate bail payment or advocate releasing detained young people to intensive community-based programming.

Together, these strategies could reduce the number of 16- and 17-year-olds in city custody by an additional 20 percent over the next five years. The adolescent population has already been in swift decline. The number of 16 and 17-year-olds in Department of Correction custody has hovered around 125 for most of 2018, which is down by 17 percent compared to this time last year.

The programs join a host of other reforms the Administration is pursuing to ensure that young people in the criminal justice system are treated in a developmentally appropriate way, maximizing their opportunity to build a productive future. The City was an early and vocal advocate for Raising the Age of criminal responsibility in New York State and, since the passage of this law last year, the City remains committed to transition 16- and 17- year-olds off of Rikers Island later this year.

The programs announced today build on the success of the City's juvenile justice system for youth under the age of 16. Fewer young people are being arrested and entering the juvenile justice system than ever before. In the last three years, there has been a 32 percent decrease in admissions to juvenile detention. The Administration for Children's Services, which manages the City's juvenile justice system, has made significant strides in improving the lives of children and families involved in the justice system, with a particular focus on keeping young people strongly connected to their communities.

In preparation to absorb 16- and 17-year-olds into this youth justice system, the City is currently working to design and develop age-appropriate facilities that prioritize education, vocational programming, therapeutic services, and have space for outdoor recreation. Additionally, the City has eliminated punitive segregation for all 16-21-year-olds and enhanced family-engagement for incarcerated youth as well as individualized support teams for young people with histories of violent behavior.

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the Department of Correction are also partnering to provide expanded re-entry planning in custody along with educational, employment and health support once young people return to the community. The Department of Correction is also now actively recruiting officers capable of working with adolescents and addressing their unique needs.

Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, said, "One critical pathway to getting young people off of Rikers Island is by reducing the number of teenagers in custody through effective, community-based services when appropriate. These programs can have a major impact on the lives of the people involved and help reduce the number of teenagers in the City's custody."

Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann said, “The Department is fully committed to moving adolescents off Rikers Island and into facilities with continued access to meaningful, age-appropriate programming that we have worked hard within our agency and with provider partners to develop. We know from our successes at RNDC that these programs work, and we’re going to help make sure they continue to work as we move our adolescents into facilities that have been designed in a manner dedicated to meet their needs.”

“As we focus on the closure of Rikers Island, services and resources that drive down the number of young people in the system are critically important. These programs will help address the problems at-risk teens face, and I commend the Mayor for this investment,” said **Council Member Keith Powers, Chair, Criminal Justice Committee.**

Council Member Robert Holden said, “Any amount we contribute to keep New York City’s youth out of trouble is money well spent.”

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