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## **MAYOR ADAMS UNVEILS PLAN TO PREVENT AND END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN NEW YORK CITY**

*\$15 Million Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Grant From Federal Government Will Fund Over 60 Initiatives to Support Most Vulnerable New York City Youth*

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the release of “[Opportunity Starts with a Home: New York City’s Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness](#).” Powered by a \$15 million Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the plan details city-, federally, and privately funded initiatives to serve youth experiencing homelessness comprehensively and compassionately. Developed in partnership with nonprofit partners and youth with lived experience, this plan also includes policy proposals to cut through city bureaucracy and better serve youth experiencing homelessness.

“New York City has always been a place for those seeking refuge and acceptance, including young people, many of whom are fighting discrimination, bigotry, or family rejection,” said **Mayor Adams**. “With this plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, we are listening to our young people and stepping up with new investments and programs to support them. From housing, to counseling, to job opportunities, we will never stop working to help New York City’s youth find their way. To every young person in our city: We have your back, we’re looking out for you, and the entire city is ready to help you chart your future.”

“Today’s announcement of ‘Opportunity Starts with a Home’ marks a new day in the city’s inclusion of and outreach to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “Thank you to our government partners, our nonprofit partners, and all the young people who were involved.”

“Today’s announcement is a true result of the power of collaboration,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. “This administration worked with countless agencies, on-the-ground providers, and, most importantly, homeless youth with lived experience to develop this incredible report. I’m confident that together as one united effort we can finally turn the page and address the pressing needs of our homeless youth.”

“DYCD is proud to be the lead agency on this comprehensive initiative that included the most important voices of all: the young people who have lived experiences with homelessness, with plenty of great ideas on how to make things better,” said **New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Keith Howard**. “DYCD and our sister agencies look forward to reviewing the findings of this process so that the city can improve interagency coordination and provide the support our young people need and deserve.”

“To experience homelessness, especially as a young person, compounds numerous stressors that can be challenging to overcome,” said **New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga**. “We are eager to tailor our financial counseling for the first time for youth experiencing homelessness. By arming these youth with tools to improve their financial stability, they will be more empowered and better prepared to navigate financial challenges.”

“This administration is truly listening to the voices of vulnerable New Yorkers to inform our holistic and human-centered approach to addressing homelessness,” said **New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Gary P. Jenkins**. “We are incredibly grateful for Deputy Mayors Anne Williams-Isom and Sheena Wright’s visionary leadership on this phenomenal effort to bring everyone to the table to identify strategic, meaningful, and creative solutions to end and prevent youth homelessness. With these significant investments and wide range of impactful initiatives, we are doubling down on our commitment to comprehensively serve and support young New Yorkers in need.”

“Young people — our city’s greatest asset — need and deserve the dignity, stability, and opportunity that comes with a home to call their own,” said **New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. “This collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to ensuring that young adults have safe and stable housing is exactly the investment we need. We know that because it is centered on the voices and lived experiences of young people. ACS is pleased to join with other city agencies and community partners in advancing this important plan.”

“In order to give all students the opportunity to thrive in and out of school, we must work together to create safe spaces for them to call home,” said **New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor David C. Banks**. “I am very excited about the security that our most vulnerable young people will enjoy as a result of this program and the aid it provides. Our educators work every day to ensure students experiencing homelessness have a supportive and safe place to go to school every day, and this program will only strengthen that work.”

“We are proud to work with the mayor’s office and our sister agencies to help provide opportunities to New York City youth who are experiencing homelessness,” said **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Sue Donoghue**. “Through job placement within our agency, free access to our recreation centers, and specially developed programming, we hope to add to the development of our city’s young people by offering them enriched experiences in supportive environments.”

“The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program is a great example of our commitment to empowering the people with lived experience of homelessness. We must do everything we can to give a voice to the youth and young adults who have firsthand knowledge of homelessness and the bureaucracy that surrounds the effort to become stably housed,” said **Chief Housing Officer Jessica Katz**. “I am so appreciative of the collaboration and insights of our Youth Advisory Board that have helped draft this plan and shaped this administration’s policies already. I look forward to continuing this partnership alongside Deputy Mayors Williams-Isom and Wright and our city government colleagues to house all New Yorkers and ensure our younger neighbors have the opportunities they deserve to thrive in this city.”

“We are proud to partner in this extraordinary effort to ensure that young people experiencing homelessness receive all the resources, support, and opportunities they need,” said **Tina Chiu and Jason Hansman, acting co-directors, Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health (OCMH)**. “Youth who experience homelessness often feel emotionally distressed and alienated from peers. Connecting youth to compassionate and culturally sensitive mental health resources and services that support their emotional well-being is an important part of this collaboration. OCMH is committed to promoting and strengthening access to mental health care in partnership with youth with lived experience and city agencies.”

In September 2021, the City of New York was awarded its first-ever, \$15 million YHDP grant from HUD to support a wide range of new housing and service interventions to address youth homelessness. The city undertook an intensive multi-sector community planning process with shared ownership of decision-making and program design. The result of the work outlined a plan for how to invest the grant, implement policy changes, and spearhead new city initiatives towards preventing and ending youth homelessness.

The plan was drafted during an eight-month planning process that included 20 organizations, including 15 city agencies, youth with lived experience, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and philanthropic and research partners. Central to this planning process was the leadership of youth with lived experience through New York City’s Youth Action Board (YAB), which helped ensure that the plan was written in collaboration with young people who have lived experience with homelessness. Throughout the process, the YAB members served as key collaborators in developing a plan that is intersectional in its approach to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

The resulting plan contains more than 60 individual actions that will collectively move the city toward preventing and ending youth homelessness, including an investment of \$11.1 million over the next year to pursue innovative and large-scale projects funded by the city, the NYC Fund to End Youth and Family Homelessness, and HUD. Initiatives include:

- The city’s first-ever Host Home and Shelter Diversion Program, primarily serving the LGBTQ+ ballroom community of New York City;
- 102 new units of rapid rehousing for youth and young adults;
- New street outreach programming developed specifically for youth;
- The city’s first-ever financial counseling program tailored to youth experiencing homelessness — developed by DCWP and DYCD;

- Creation of over 20 jobs for youth with lived experience in both city- and HUD-funded programs;
- Creation of the first Housing and Peer Navigator Training Institute; and
- Development of *YourPeer*, a mobile platform to connect youth to services.

The plan's steering committee will oversee implementation and evaluation of the new initiatives and commitments. Newly funded programs will begin by the end of the calendar year.

“The innovations described in this plan are bold and brave, attesting to the power of collaboration,” said **Maryanne Schretzman, executive director, New York City Center for Innovation Through Data Intelligence**. “This plan represents a tremendous commitment by government agencies, community partners, and the youth themselves to implement creative solutions to effect positive change for youth experiencing homelessness.”

“To have completed our YHDP planning and see the result of our shared work is a very important moment for our community,” said **Cole Giannone, senior advisor for youth homelessness; and YHDP co-lead**. “Preventing and ending youth homelessness requires all of us, and I am extremely excited to see so many stakeholders come together to implement policy changes, invest in new programs, and evaluate the efficacy of interventions to help shape our system to best care for youth and young adults who face homelessness in our city.”

“I’m honored to have represented DYCD in this process, and especially grateful to the dynamic young people on the Youth Action Board for their valuable leadership. This was a great example of collaboration across city agencies — including those not typically engaged in the issue of youth homelessness — and the planning committee has come up with a report that is stronger than it would have been had it come from any one entity,” said **YHDP co-lead Jessica Raithel**. “Thank you to the providers and advocates for working in partnership with us and to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for helping to raise up youth voices as we collectively move forward in serving our young people in new and exciting ways.”

“This plan is an exciting moment for our community. It is the result of an immense amount of hard work and commitment from New York City CoC stakeholders who came together in an unprecedented way to identify solutions and interventions to address youth homelessness in our city,” said **Kristen Mitchell, co-chair, New York City Continuum of Care (CoC)**. “We’re excited work in partnership with young people whose lives have been affected by homelessness and offer an opportunity to support them in whatever way possible.”

“We are excited by the work New York City has done so far and will be undertaking to end youth homelessness,” said **Jemine Bryon, deputy assistant secretary, HUD**. “The city has centered youth in the design and implementation of its program, and that is how, as a national movement, we can end youth homelessness in this country.”

“We would like to recognize and congratulate the Youth Action Board for their hard work and participation alongside our allies during the YHDP process. Their hard work and dedication have successfully led to this being a truly collaborative and intentional process. The work of the YAB has ensured that the approved plan captures the voices and experiences of those closest to the

crisis of youth homelessness in this city by leveraging our power to create and inform the solutions after years of fighting for a seat at the table,” said **Lyndon Hernandez, Shaquasha King, and Elizabeth Sutter, YAB YHDP leads**. “We would like to thank Cole Giannone, Jessica Raithel from DYCD, the Coalition for Homeless Youth, the Technical Assistance Collaborative, and all of the providers that support the work of ending youth homelessness day in and day out. We hope with the release of this plan the administration will continue to acknowledge and elevate youth voices, and we will put those with lived expertise front and center moving forward.”

“Good Shepherd services applauds the commitment of the City of New York and HUD to fund the ‘Opportunity Starts with a Home’ plan to prevent and end youth homelessness in New York City,” said **Elizabeth Garcia, chief program officer, Good Shepherd Services**. “As a proud member of the YHDP core and planning teams, and an ongoing member of the steering committee, we are delighted to see our work throughout this past year move into fruition. We look forward to launching our street outreach and rapid rehousing programs to do our part in preventing and ending youth homelessness.”

“Programs for homeless youth are critical for placing them on a different path and drastically reducing their chances of homelessness in adulthood,” says **Elizabeth McCarthy, CEO, Sheltering Arms**. “Since the first youth who moved into our rapid rehousing program in 2019, we have found success in setting up our residents for stability in adulthood. We are grateful for this investment in a program that we see as the final and most important step in our continuum of services for the homeless youth population.”

“The Ali Forney Center applauds and celebrates the advancement the city is making to support our homeless LGBTQ youth,” said **Alex Roque, executive director, Ali Forney Center**. “This past year has been transformational, thanks to the investment from the city, which includes innovative approaches to housing, housing navigation, mental health supports, and other new and vital funding. As the LGBTQ youth homelessness crises continues to devastate our community, we are grateful to partner with the city on responding to this growing need.”

“We know access to support services and critical resources is key to preventing and eradicating youth homelessness,” said **Lisa O’Connor, deputy CEO and chief program officer, Safe Horizon**. “With investments such as the \$15 million Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant, it makes it possible for Safe Horizon’s Streetwork Project and additional agencies dedicated to serving homeless youth to continue spearheading initiatives, as outlined in this plan, that ensure this population is fully supported.”

“The Coalition for Homeless Youth is honored to have served on the ‘Opportunity Starts with a Home: New York City’s Plan to End Youth Homelessness,’ leadership team,” said **Jamie Powlovich, executive director, Coalition for Homeless Youth**. “This plan transcends administrations and reflects the work of a community of providers, advocates, and youth with lived experience that worked in collaboration with a small group of dedicated government representatives to produce intersectional goals, objectives, and action steps that will expand the supports and services for homeless young adults, increase the supply of permanent housing resources, connect youth to permanent housing faster, create new full-time roles for youth who

have the lived experience of homelessness, provide community responsive supports for LGBTQIA+ youth, strengthen street outreach and harm reduction supports to youth living on the streets, and hopefully permanently dismantle the system-silos that have historically discouraged successful cross-systems collaboration to adequately meet the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness across New York City.”

“Everyone should have a place to call home and a community of support. To achieve that goal, we must work together to prevent and end the crisis of youth homelessness rather than simply continue to manage it,” said **John Kimble, senior advisor, NYC Fund to End Youth and Family Homelessness**. “The New York City Fund to End Youth and Family Homelessness proudly joins this collective effort led by the city, the Youth Action Board, advocates, and service providers to make that goal a reality. The fund will continue to support innovations that transform our city’s systems to build that reality and to center equity and lived expertise in doing so. We call on everyone who believes in opportunity and justice for the next generation of New Yorkers to join this effort and help make sure it succeeds.”

“Following years of preparatory work, it is thrilling to undertake the inclusive and equitable system change laid out in this plan,” said **Adam Bard, founder, Streetlives**. “Collaboration between young leaders with lived experience of homelessness and all other stakeholders has been the enabling force, the springboard for innovation and new funding. We must continue to encourage cross-cutting initiatives. YourPeer NYC will empower those with lived experience, drive a culture of transparent information sharing, and improve the chances of young people in New York City to avoid or exit homelessness. Streetlives looks forward to making good on the promise of a community-centered technology platform connecting service seekers and providers.”

“It has been incredibly impactful to work alongside stakeholders in New York City for the past months during the YHDP planning process,” said **Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) Associate T. Ortega**. “TAC staff are looking forward to continuing the work for the next two years with organizations receiving the funding announced today, with the YAB to ensure projects align with values and guiding principles affirmed during the planning process, and the ‘Opportunity Starts at Home’ steering committee to widen the systems impact that the projects will begin.”

“Homeless Services United is proud to endorse New York City’s ‘Opportunity Starts with a Home Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.’ HUD’s \$15 million award is an exciting opportunity to tailor new and existing services and resources to how young people access assistance,” said **Catherine Trapani, executive director, Homeless Services United (HSU)**. “HSU is extremely grateful to partner with multiple city agencies, including DYCD, DSS, ACS, DOE, DOMHM, and DCWP, the CoC’s Youth Action Board, and nonprofit service providers in the creation of this plan, and we are hopeful that it will serve as a model for aligning New York City agencies, nonprofit providers, people with lived experience, and advocates to remove barriers to assistance and shorten and avoid the trauma of homelessness for all New Yorkers.”

“Covenant House New York is grateful to have been part of a rich process with the City of New York, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, service providers, and, most

importantly, youth with lived experience, to develop 60 actions that we hope will move New York City closer to ending youth homelessness,” said **Nancy Downing, executive director, Covenant House**.

“Hetrick-Martin Institute is honored to be present for the inaugural launch of New York City’s first Host Home and Shelter Diversion Program and excited to continue providing support and resources to members of the community through this new program,” says **Jermaine Ellis, director of community engagement and program operations, Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI)**. “HMI has worked extensively with the house and ballroom community for nearly two decades. Witnessing how individuals support one another in a parental and family structure, particularly around housing support, is both remarkable and rewarding. Homelessness is an issue still very much at large among LGBTQIA+ youth, so we applaud the efforts of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program in preventing and putting an end to it.”

“I commend Mayor Adams and Deputy Mayors Williams-Isom and Wright for their initiatives to aid our local youth experiencing homelessness,” said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program will provide much-needed resources and support to collectively move our city towards preventing and ending youth homelessness as a whole. The presence of the Youth Action Board has also been vital to the development of this plan, and I am glad to see the program’s multifaceted approach addressing housing, professional support, and community connections to prevent youth homelessness over the long term.”

“This comprehensive partnership between the city and the federal government will be critical in providing intervention and support to New York City youth experiencing homelessness by helping them transition into more permanent housing and becoming more independent,” said **U.S. Representative Nicole Malliotakis**. “Early intervention is key to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and this initiative will surely help youth in need live a positive life instead of one on the streets.”

“The new programs that are coming to New York City through this funding will help our young people avoid the unfortunate experience of homelessness and work to prevent youth from falling into homelessness in the first place,” said **New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** “Many times, when a young person is facing homelessness, all they need is a helping hand to set them on the right track, and these programs will work towards identifying the specific needs of homeless youth. I have high hopes that this set of programs and initiatives will positively impact New York’s homeless population.”

“I would like to thank the mayor’s administration for focusing on youth homelessness and on pooling together funds to maximize solutions for youth facing severe housing insecurity,” said **New York State Senator Luis Sepúlveda, chair, Committee on Cities**. “‘Opportunity Starts with a Home: New York City’s Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness’ integrates communities that have been disadvantaged and need our support by outlining a comprehensive strategy to service programs where they are most needed.”

“No group in our city is more vulnerable than youth suffering from homelessness. As of 2020, almost 7,000 youth were reported to be homeless in New York City, and approximately 40

percent of these individuals identified as LGBTQ+,” said **New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson**. “Any effort to eliminate youth homelessness must address the severe marginalization faced by this group on account of their identity and the psychological harm it causes them. I am pleased to learn Mayor Adams has taken this approach in the new ‘Opportunity Starts with a Home’ program, and I look forward to its implementation later this year.”

“Fighting homelessness is one of my main priorities, therefore I support any program that will create permanent housing for families, especially families with children,” said **New York State Assemblymember Nikki Lucas**. “Over the past 20 years, the district I now serve has seen homelessness increase every year, which is one of the reasons I ran for office. I am committed to working closely with Mayor Adams and the partnering agencies to end youth homelessness.”

“By listening to those who have expertise and lived experience, DYCD has developed the comprehensive, evidence-based plan that will uplift our homeless youth,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. “Through shelter diversion, rehousing, financial empowerment, peer navigation, and multiple new outreach initiatives, the city will steer our most vulnerable youth to stable, productive, and successful lives. Even more outstanding, there will be an oversight committee to ensure the program’s success — another example of Mayor Adams’ ‘Get Stuff Done’ mentality. I thank the mayor and all the city agencies involved for their dedication and partnership in ending youth homelessness once and for all.”

“Everyone has a right to safe, quality, permanent, and affordable housing, yet the reality is that homelessness is disproportionately impacting our youth and more specifically our LGBTQIA+ teens and young adults,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson**. “For this reason, I look forward to working with the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Programming, creating 102 new units of rapid rehousing for youth and young adults, creating a new street outreach program and their peer navigation program in DYCD from homeless and runaway youth, and more will cast safety nets with our children and help guard them from falling prey to city street and so many other programs. I want to thank Mayor Adams and Deputy Mayors Anne Williams-Isom and Sheena Wright for their work in securing the funding and prioritizing our youth who need it the most. This investment will be an opportunity to change outcomes and create a better understanding of the specific needs of our youth.”

“Too often, youth experiencing homelessness do not receive the level of education, support, and stability needed to reach their potential,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**. “Over the last decade, New York City has increased investments to empower runaway and homeless youth, but there is more work to be done. I commend Mayor Adams and his administration for taking this issue seriously and proposing a roadmap to prevent and end youth homelessness.”

“In the richest city in the world, it is shameful that anyone should suffer the indignity and dangers of homelessness, especially our young people,” said **New York City Councilmember Tiffany Caban**. “I wholeheartedly support these initiatives and am grateful for the partnership of our friends in Washington that we are able to launch them. Too often, our city has made the lethal error of approaching homelessness as a matter for law enforcement to handle. I have



immense confidence that the peer navigator system, which is central to these initiatives, will be greatly more effective at guaranteeing New York’s young people decent housing.”

“Preventing and ending youth homelessness are two major steps our city can take toward improving outcomes among our young people,” said **New York City Councilmember Kamillah Hanks**. “These interagency initiatives, especially when including the voices of young people who have lived this experience firsthand, will act as a significant investment in our city’s youth and can make meaningful impacts on our public safety and workforce development efforts.”

“Our youth are in need of alternative resources to support their potential, and the mayor’s commitment to curbing the number of youths experiencing homelessness is a true testament to his priorities,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velazquez**. “We must continue to also support initiatives provided by nonprofits that provide critical services such as job and job-training access across the city, enabling participants to shape their futures. If we want to decrease homelessness among our youth, we must provide much-needed services and support them along the way.”

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