



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 10, 2022, 1:00 PM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS ANNOUNCES PLAN TO PREVENT AND END
YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN NEW YORK CITY**

Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Ison, Health and Human Services: Thank you so much. How's everybody doing? I am Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Ison. So I've never been in this drop-in center, but I've spent a lot of time on Jamaica Avenue shopping with my mother when I was eight years old. So I was having all kinds of flashbacks when I came here. It is so nice to be back in my home borough, and it is so nice here to be with all of you for this great occasion.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Ison: I'm so glad to be here, and to be part of such a collaborative and groundbreaking effort to support young people who are experiencing homelessness and to put forward a plan that will address these issues now and into the future. We know that the most powerful solutions come from a cross-sector collaboration with input from people with lived experience, directly impacted youth from nonprofit providers, and from city agencies. So I am so happy to start with thanks right now to the commissioners, we've got an all star team here, and agencies who are vital to today's announcement.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Ison: I want to give a shout out, and just wave when I say your name, to the DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard. DCWP Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga. DSS Commissioner Gary Jenkins. Office to End Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel. And ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Ison: Thank you to all the providers who have spent hours of time in planning this process while managing your own direct services. And during the pandemic, you've had to do so much on top of that, and so much has been on your plate. So we thank you, thank you, for all of the ideas that you've brought to the table, and for making this plan a reality today.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Ison: Thank you to Covenant House New York. Covenant House in the house? All right, we can clap them up. Sheltering Arms, the Legal Aid Society, Safe Horizons, Good Shepherd Services, Project Renewal, the Jericho Project, HeartShare. I guess we should wait to the end, right? This is like the Oscars. Please wait until the end, because I'm trying to get to y'all, because you are the most important voices we're going to hear today, all right? So just give me ... All right? Okay. Let me go. HeartShare, St. Vincent's, and Hetrick-Martin Institute. All right. Now we can clap.

[Applause]

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Special shout out to our advocates, Coalition for Homeless Youth, Homeless Services United. Thank you. And thank you to Chapin Hall for all of your partnership on the research pieces along the way. Give it up for the researchers. You've got to have the data.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Thank you to the NYC Fund to End Youth and Family Homeless, for the ways you've coordinated philanthropy to support initiatives that the community thinks will move the needle forward. Let's give it up for them. And a big, big, big round of applause to the members of the New York City Youth Action Board. It is so meaningful. It is so meaningful for us to share space with you, and to come together to implement concrete solutions so that people coming up behind you don't have to experience the homelessness that you all did, or have the experience that you did. And you did that with compassion, in a very human-centered way. So thank you all again.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Next, it is my pleasure to bring to the microphone Nilli Soni, the Division Director at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Soni?

[...]

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Thank you so much, Miss Soni. I love the way that she said we can end youth homelessness. I was with a group of people yesterday, and they were talking about, "Why is this administration talking about ending homelessness?" And I was like, "If you can't even articulate a bold vision, how are you going to achieve it?" I want to introduce someone who has a bold vision for this city, our mayor, Mr. Eric Adams.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This is such an important initiative. I used to take the Q5 bus to walk to the Q31 to go to Bayside High School, leaving to South Jamaica, Queens, 167th Street and 111th Avenue. That little small house with my mom is located right here at this bus terminal. But what was more significant about it as I walked up the steps is that, I remember, in addition to my book bag, I had that large garbage bag. It was something that each one of us had at the door with our names on it. Mom wanted to make sure just in case the marshal came and threw us out that night, we would have a change of clothing and won't be humiliated and embarrassed because we did not have a home to come to at the end of our school day.

Mayor Adams: This is not a professional journey for me. This is not the journey of being a mayor of the City of New York. This is a personal journey. A home is more than four walls of where you sit inside. It's a precursor that allows you to sleep so you can experience the American dream. And too many people, particularly young people, are living the nightmarish reality that that dream is never going to be part of their lives. That's why we're doing this. That's why we're dedicated to it. And to all of these organizations, those of you who are here, who are committed to this work. You're not doing this to become a billionaire. You're not doing it because you are going to reach some level of economic stability. In fact, many days, they're struggling. Many

days, there are uncertainties. But nothing is more profitable than finding your passion and commitment, and you can look over the investments you made in our young people as they fight towards the future of our city.

Mayor Adams: This is what this initiative is about. And I'm proud of the young people who came together. We didn't do this from our voices. We heard them. They sat down. We used the \$15 million that the federal government put in the grant that we received. And we said, "You come, those of you who have experienced homelessness, tell us the best way to fix this problem." And that's how this administration exists and lives. We had, for the first time, a group of formerly homeless and current homeless men and women that came to City Hall, and sat down and met with us and dealing with these very real conversations of these problems we have, generational problems. Generational problems. The problems of youth homelessness did not start on January 1st, 2022. For far too long, we've ignored what we believe has been a crucial issue for us.

Mayor Adams: When you look at the numbers, there's almost over 3,700 young people who are homeless. Many of them are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and many of them are young people of color. When you talk about juvenile homelessness, you're talking about young people of color. No one wants to talk about that. They want to ignore it and just brush over it and say, "Well, all the juveniles are having a problem." No, a disproportionate number of them are people of color. And we see it every day and it's real. It puts them in dangerous environments. It feeds the sex trafficking industry. It feeds some of the victims of violence and it feeds some of the violence we're seeing in our city. And that's why we must go upstream to solve this problem.

Mayor Adams: So as the mayor of the City of New York, I'm saying I see you and I am here to help you because I am you and I was able to survive. And now I'm coming back to make sure I bring young people along with me. So today, we're making big changes and it starts with our report, a powerful report: Opportunity Starts with a Home.

Mayor Adams: Opportunity Starts with a Home, our bold plan to end homelessness. And you're right, deputy mayor, you have to put this stuff in the universe. If you don't put it into the universe, it's not going to materialize. We have to be bold and out front about reaching out destination. Eight months, eight months of planning to get to where we are right now, developed by partners. Listening to New Yorkers, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, philanthropic and research partners, just looking at the data and having data will bring us in the right direction. And we're committed to this in a real way.

Mayor Adams: This report contains over 60 individual actions that will collectively move New York City towards preventing and ending youth homelessness. Some of the actions that we're taking, they may have gone over already. But, increasing supply of permanent housing because shelter is not a home. That's not the ending place. That's the beginning place of analyzing how do we get you to where you ought to be and deal with the holistic approach to this from healthcare to education, to a mental health, as I walk through many of my shelters, what I'm seeing. So it's placing people in permanent housing. 102 new units of rapid rehousing for youth and young adults, creating this first ever host home and shelter diversion programs, primarily serving the LGBTQ+ community.

Mayor Adams: Expanding and supportive services, including financial literacy. We are just leaning into this financial literacy because if you get a home and then you don't have the skill set to maintain a home, you are on that treadmill. You're back out into the street. Learning how to manage your money, use your money in the correct way is important to this administration. Create new paid full-time roles for homeless youths, and strengthen our street outreach and harm reductions to youth living on the streets with a new outreach program. So it's a complete combination. It's a complete holistic approach. It's something that we should be proud of. This opportunity starts with a home, this is our plan. When we put it in writing, we want a blueprint moving towards it together.

Mayor Adams: So to the young people who are here and to many of you, we're not going to always get it right. I say all the time, I'm perfectly imperfect. But I'm dedicated, I'm committed. I'm blessed to be the mayor of this city and work hard for New Yorkers. We're not going to stop trying. When you look at my administration, my administration is made up of people who have experienced the lives that people are living right now. Gary Jenkins, who deals with the homeless, he lived in a homeless shelter. He brings that to the game every day. You dig into the crevices of my senior management, and you are going to find the stories that people are experiencing. I don't need people who are going to just go through the motions. I need people that's going to have the right motions to move our city in the right direction. We have betrayed New Yorkers and we have abandoned them. We have thrown up our hands. You can't have a \$101 billion budget and still have these preexisting problems. We're not going to win everything, but damn it, we're not going to stop trying. Thank you.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Thank you so much, Mayor Adams. What do you always say to us? "Well said, well said." Okay, now we're moving to what I think are the most important voices in the room. I'd like to bring to the microphones members of the Youth Action Board, members Liz Sutter, Lyndon Hernandez, and let me hope I get this right, Jaquana.

[...]

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: And so you must be Key King?

[...]

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Okay. I wanted to make sure to say your name out loud. I love the way y'all collaborated and did that. That was fantastic. And you had all these people blushing out here. You can't see with their mask, but thank you so much for that gratitude. Continuing with centering the voices of the most important people in the room. I'd like to bring forth representatives from the Coalition of Homeless Youth members, Skye Adrian and Maddox Guerrilla.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Thank you, and I think it's a real reflection on why we were successful, by hearing the voices of those who were impacted. Some more topics that folks can answer, then we do a few off-topics. Okay.

Question: Yeah. In terms of the implementation of the report, is that all being funded through the federal, I think 15 million federal dollars? And what form will the street outreach take?

Mayor Adams: You want to touch that?

Commissioner Keith Howard, Department of Youth and Community Development: \$3.1 million is coming from the city funding, and that's in collaboration with the Department of Consumer Affairs and Workers Protection. Okay. I'm sorry?

Question: Addition to the federal?

Commissioner Howard: That's in addition with that federal funding, yes.

Mayor Adams: Okay. All right. Thank you. Let's do a few more.

Question: Hi, mayor. Do you want to respond...

Mayor Adams: Be nicer than Bernadette.

Question: Do you want to respond to Governor Abbott on Fox News this morning challenging you to make my day by sending New Yorkers to campaign against his reelection while also vowing to keep sending buses full of migrants, so New York city can get a taste of what the Texas governor is dealing with on the Southern border?

Mayor Adams: Well, first of all, I know he thinks he's Clint Eastwood, but he's not. He is an anti-American governor that is really going against everything we stand for. And I am going to do everything feasible to make sure the people of Texas realize how harmful he is to us globally. He's a global embarrassment, because this is not what we do as Americans. All of us, and I'm sure if he goes into his lineage, he came from somewhere, and if his ancestors were treated the way he's treated these asylum seekers and migrants, then he would not be where he is right now.

Question: On the asylum seekers, I think there was a couple buses that arrived this morning, maybe one last night. Is there anything you guys have learned from the migrants who got off those buses? Do we know how many had arrived since yesterday?

Mayor Adams: No, we don't know the count. And again, as I stated over the weekend, there were some who were disembarking before they got inside the last stop because rumors were out there that if they would get off at the last stop, they could be apprehended by ICE or that the other agencies would apprehend them. So without the proper coordination, we're unable to receive people at one location and give them the support they deserve. So we're not sure of the exact count, but often they end up at our intake centers. And if anyone in the city sees someone

that they believe needs assistance, we are asking them to point them and direct them to the intake centers.

Question: If I could follow up too, obviously the governor of Texas is not being cooperative or helpful, and taking kind of an antagonistic pose. But can you tell us about anything the city has done to reach out to them, whether it's the Abbott administration or any officials in Texas in private [inaudible] information?

Mayor Adams: Oh, it's clear that he would rather craft his policies through sound bites and not sound decisions. What we have been doing is communicating to those local community-based organizations on the ground. The Port Authority has been amazing because in order for the buses to stop at the particular locations, they must receive permission from the port authority. So they have been extremely helpful, and so we've been coordinating as much as possible with those who are on the ground, with the port authority, and those officials who are responsible elected officials to get this done.

Question: On the Texas issue, have you spoken to Beto O'Rourke or his campaign about the election in November? And then separately, I wanted to see if you have a reaction to Donald Trump today saying that he was pleading the fifth in all questions [inaudible].

Mayor Adams: I've heard so, and no, I have not communicated or coordinated with the O'Rourke campaign or him. And we are going to continue to focus on giving the services. We're talking about homeless youth today. When I was at the shelter on Bedford and Atlantic Avenue, the number of young people from El Salvador that was there was a large number. If we don't get it right, these young people are going to turn into the homeless youth that we are talking about today.

Mayor Adams: And when it comes down to Donald Trump, let those that are responsible carry out their review, and they're going to come to the determination. We have so much we have to do to deal with the damage that was created during that administration. From Supreme Court decisions to how we tarnished our image across the globe. We need to focus on doing that. I think the final analysis is going to determine if there was anything improperly done. Okay. All right. Thank you. Thanks all.

###