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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 4, 2022
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**MAYOR ADAMS, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES ANNOUNCE
‘COLLEGE CHOICE’ PROGRAM TO HELP COVER COST OF COLLEGE
EXPENSES FOR HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

*ACS Will Continue to Support Youth in Care by Paying up to \$15,000 Each Year in Tuition, Plus
Room and Board Not Covered by a Student’s Financial Aid Package*

Providing a \$60 Daily Stipend, Coaching, Tutoring, and Career Counseling

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Commissioner Jess Dannhauser today announced “College Choice,” a program that will provide college students in foster care with greater support systems, including financial support, so they can attend the college of their dreams without having to worry about the hefty price tag. As part of the program, ACS will help pay remaining costs of college tuition— up to \$15,000 each year — in addition to any room and board not covered by a student’s financial aid package. College students in foster care will also receive a \$60 daily stipend per year, which can be used towards food, clothing, transportation, and more.

All youth in foster care will additionally be able to keep the coaching they already receive through “Fair Futures,” which has provided thousands of youth in foster care, ages 11 to 21, with dedicated coaches and tutors since 2019. The Adams administration recently expanded Fair Futures for youth ages 21-26. Further, the New York Foundling — a non-profit social service organization that supports young people in foster care— will provide students with tutoring, career counseling, and other related services.

“College Choice will provide college students in foster care with the support they need to complete their college education successfully and attend the school of their choice, regardless of cost,” said **Mayor Adams**. “This new program provides our young people in foster care help in covering up to \$15,000 in tuition costs each year not covered by financial aid, as well as room and board, and even provides a daily stipend for food or clothes. Growing up has never been more challenging, so we are holding up the torch to support our young people. No students’ chances for success should depend on factors outside of their control. Now, our youth in foster care can attend a community college, a CUNY, a SUNY, an Ivy League, an HBCU, or any other school they dream of without worrying about how they pay for their education.”

“This program is truly remarkable. College Choice will provide the opportunity for young people in the foster care system to pursue their goals and dreams, with reliable, realistic, and sustained support,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams Isom**. “The program accounts for day-to-day expenses and real-world costs, all of which give young people the sincere chance to advance educational attainment and likely their lifetime earning ability. Thank you to ACS for its leadership and to all of our philanthropic and nonprofit partners for making this program possible.”

“New York City is making sure more doors of opportunity are open for young people in foster care, and the College Choice program is just one more way that we are doing that,” said **ACS Commissioner Dannhauser**. “This new program will mean that young people in foster care can attend the college of their dreams without having to worry about the financial nightmare. No matter the school — east coast, west coast, public, private, two years, or four years — ACS will support our young scholars in foster care. We are thrilled to launch the ‘College Choice’ program and I am confident it will help put more and more young people on the path to success.”

“A college degree is a major step toward upward mobility and economic freedom, but it is often out of reach for students because they can’t pay for costs not covered by financial aid. I’m proud of New York City for providing a financial pathway for young people in foster care to pay for tuition, room and board costs, and other essentials, like food and transportation,” said **The City University of New York (CUNY) Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “These young people shouldn’t have to go hungry or build debt to attend college. More than half of the students benefiting from College Choice this academic year are attending a CUNY college and we are grateful to Mayor Adams for helping these young people get the support they need to achieve their educational dreams.”

“With the Dorm Project, I was able to pursue my dual bachelor’s and master’s degrees without having to worry about my financial situation. I was really able to just focus on my goals and my studies. The College Choice program is now a resource available to all youth in care if they choose to pursue higher education,” said **Sanjida Afruz, student participant in College Choice at City College**. “The College Choice program essentially says that young people in foster care can and should dream big. With time and evident passion from people, like Mayor Adams and Commissioner Dannhauser, we are seeing changes that we have advocated for, and it makes me happier than ever.”

“For over 150 years, The Foundling has been dedicated to serving our community. Our Fostering College Success Initiative is an example of how we have responded to meet the needs of the children and families that we serve,” said **Melanie Hartzog, president and CEO, The New York Foundling**. “We are grateful to the Adams administration and the Administration for Children’s Services for launching the College Choice program and expanding the vital supports provided by the Fostering College Success Initiative. Continuing this partnership means equipping College Choice participants with the necessary framework to reach their full potential.”

College Choice builds off the Adams administration's investments in upstream solutions and deep commitment to improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care, and helping ensure they lead healthy, productive, and self-sufficient adult lives. All full-time college students in foster care will be eligible for the benefits as long as they have applied for financial aid, maintain a 2.0 grade point average, and participate in any academic support programs for which they're eligible. Benefits will be available for a maximum of three years for an associate degree or five years for a bachelor's degree.

College Choice will offer all full-time college students in foster care the following benefits covered by ACS:

- Tuition and mandatory fees (up to \$15,000 per year), that are not covered by a student's financial aid award.
- The cost of room and board.
- A stipend of \$60 per day to cover food and other expenses while attending school. This benefit is also available for up to six months after graduation from college.
- Students attending a college or university in New York City can choose to live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in one of the following six housing options:
 - The Towers at City College of New York
 - The Summit at Queens College
 - Hunter College Residence Hall (Only for students attending Hunter College)
 - International House of New York
 - 92Y Residence
 - Outpost-Club Student Housing in New York City
- Students attending in-person classes at a college or university outside of New York City can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in safe and appropriate off-campus private housing.
- Students enrolled only in online classes at a college or university can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in any of the six housing options for New York City students.
- Students who want to stay in college/university housing during the summer are required to be engaged in meaningful summer activities (such as participating in an internship or taking classes).
- Students can receive tutoring, career counseling, and related support provided online and in-person by New York Foundling staff.
- Students can maintain their Fair Futures coach while in college.

New York City leads the nation in providing support to youth in foster care and youth transitioning from foster care. Fair Futures has been in place since 2019, but the Adams administration recently provided additional resources to ACS so that Fair Futures could be expanded to include youth in foster care from ages 21 to 26.

Previously, students in foster care were eligible to participate in The Fostering College Success Initiative, also known as "The Dorm Project," which provided year-round housing and academic supports to youth in foster care attending CUNY schools. ACS also offered the Fostering College Success Stipend, which provided college students in foster care with a \$31 daily stipend.

College Choice expands upon these offerings by providing similar benefits to all students in foster care, regardless of which college they choose to attend. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. Earlier this year, the Adams administration also announced a new [vocational training and apprenticeship program, VCRED](#), for youth, ages 16-24, who are in foster care, as well as youth who recently left foster care or the juvenile justice system.

Approximately 230 young people in New York City foster care will benefit this upcoming school year from College Choice.

"As a former educator, I know how life changing a college education is in a person's life, but for too many New Yorkers, the rising costs of college make it unattainable," said **U.S.**

Representative Carolyn Maloney. "Our city's foster youth especially bear the brunt of rising college costs. I applaud Mayor Adams for making college more accessible for our city's foster youth by enacting 'College Choice,' a program that will change the outcomes of so many young people's lives."

"I'm so proud that our city is investing in children in foster care who deserve support on their higher education journey. I look forward to seeing these students succeed with the help of assistance to pay tuition and living expenses," said **New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera.**

"I commend the creation of the College Choice program to help disadvantaged youth in foster care have an opportunity at higher education, building upon the Fostering College Initiative," said **New York State Senator James Sanders.** "A college degree is absolutely essential in today's world in order to find a good job and access to opportunities for financial and personal growth. The extra money for tuition, housing, food, clothing and transportation that are provided by these programs because they are not covered by financial aid is a lifeline for these youth."

"New York City's College Choice program will ensure that youth raised in care have the opportunity to obtain a college degree, regardless of what school they plan to attend," said **New York State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud.** "This year, more than 200 New York City youth in foster care will attend college under this program and I wish them well in their studies."

"All students deserve the support they need to attend the school of their dreams, regardless of their familial background," said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes.** "Ensuring that students in foster care have more financial support — as well as the expanded academic and career support for students in foster care recently enacted by Mayor Adams — is crucial to their success in not just attending their chosen college, but in realizing their fullest potential as young New Yorkers. Investing in our students is investing in the future of our city and our state, and I am looking forward to continuing to work alongside Mayor Adams to support young New Yorkers to be the best that they can be."

"I fully support the College Choice Program because despite the personal challenges of these students who are connected through the foster care system, their living conditions will not hinder them from pursuing higher education opportunities to better themselves," said **New York State Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman.** "These students have aspirations in life, and it is our duty

to continue to educate and provide them with the proper resources to succeed. The youth are our future and to see the Administration for Children's Services' (ACS) commitment to provide this opportunity for students is a magnificent moment, not only for the students, but also for the city of New York. Thank you, Mayor Adams, for providing the resources to ACS to expand this program. Let us continue to trend forward with this initiative and prepare our youth for the future."

"Our young people exiting foster care must have no financial barriers on the road to academic success. College expenses outside of tuition can be as much as \$16,000 per year," said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. "This includes the costs of books, housing, food, transit, and more. This program will close the gap between a school's financial aid package and the full costs of college, allowing many more foster children to attend. The coaching and counseling will also be crucial to academic success for these young people, who might otherwise have no access to an advisor. When foster care children have the wraparound support they need, they can become some of New York City's best and brightest, ready to succeed in school and in life."

"As a leader who has had my leadership roots planted from my early days in public higher education, I cannot underscore the importance of having education be accessible to all," said **New York State Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia**. "All throughout my life, I have seen firsthand the effects that poverty and lack of parenthood has on many people and their chances at college readiness and career placement. By funding the college choice program, the mayor is ensuring that the many overlooked and unseen New Yorkers have an opportunity to thrive."

"I support the ACS's launch of 'College Choice', a program focused on providing students in foster care financial support for college-related expenses not already covered by traditional financial aid packages," said **New York State Assemblymember Chantel Jackson**. "Students in foster care often face obstacles not experienced by their classmates and their home status should not impede their pursuit of education."

"I fully support this program," said **New York State Assemblymember Nikki Lucas**. "Unfortunately, there is a disproportionate number of students in foster care in my district, which makes the "College Choice" program even more important for students in the 60th Assembly District. The program gives students an opportunity to go to college with a little less stress in their lives. This program might be the difference we need to have more students continue their education on the college level. Now we have to provide the outreach to get the information to the students who are eligible."

"Investing in New York City's foster care youth will expand opportunities that allow them to thrive," said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams**. "By helping defray the many costs of higher education, the city is facilitating their long-term success and laying the foundation for a brighter future. As a strong supporter of Fair Futures and other programs that support young people in foster care, I am excited about the potential of 'College Choice' and look forward to seeing its impact."

“Every child deserves the opportunity to a higher education, said **New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers**. “College Choice offers a transformative path for some of New York City's most vulnerable students, not only providing the opportunity to afford higher education, while covering costs outside of a student's financial aid package but by providing vital tutoring and career services that can be a major hurdle before and following graduation. I applaud Mayor Adams, Commissioner Dannhauser, and New York Foundling for providing students with a comprehensive approach to aid students on a pathway to success.”

“I would also like to thank Mayor Eric Adams and his administration for expanding opportunities for some of our most vulnerable students. Too many of our foster care students have to choose between working and pursuing a college education due to a lack of financial support and resources,” said **New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz**. “The College Choice Program will provide college students in foster care with financial help so that they can pursue higher education. This program helps ensure that the children in foster care remain focused on pursuing their college education and will help ensure that no child is left behind, regardless of their income.

“Our kids only get one chance at a good education and covering expenses for students in foster care will go a long way to optimize their opportunities to thrive and succeed in college,” said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman**. “Thank you to Mayor Adams and ACS for making this positive difference in the lives of our city's foster youth.

“As a former foster mom, I know first-hand the types of challenges that students in foster care experience,” said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph**. “College Choice represents an exceptional opportunity for this marginalized student population to receive a quality college education, and I applaud this announcement. We can't allow foster students to be forgotten anymore!”

“It is vital to the city's growth that we continue to invest in our young people,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**. “I'm excited about the investment in our young people around that city that will ensure they have equitable access and opportunity to higher education. Thank you to the New York City Administration for Children Services, for working to continue to provide beneficial support, for the future of youth in foster care and youth transitioning from foster care.”

“As leaders and community advocates, our responsibility is to guide our youth transitioning out of foster care to have the support to pursue their dreams,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez**. “The “College Choice” program opens doors for equity in higher education, which is long overdue. The average student already faces challenges while pursuing a college education, and the financial burden for those in foster care is already hefty. The supplemental financial support will help bridge the gap and allow students to focus on academics rather than balancing a job with their studies or worrying about how much is on in their meal plan.”

“For many New Yorkers, the path to achieving a higher learning degree is blocked due to the high costs of tuition and living costs in our city,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “College Choice is a positive step toward supporting young New Yorkers beyond high school and helping students most in need of support to thrive and succeed.”

“The ‘College Choice’ program can be the make-or-break factor in whether or not a person in our foster care system continues on to the degree they dreamed of – breaking down barriers to academic access and attainment,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “This program also goes the extra mile beyond critical financial support, ensuring participants feel supported through coaching, tutoring, and additional counseling, which are often overlooked as important factors in someone’s academic success. Thank you to our city’s leaders for making this investment and supporting our young adults in the foster care system.”

“The ability to achieve the ‘American Dream’ can be greatly aided by a college education, so no one should be denied such an education due to an inability to pay for it,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “People in foster care have already been through so much in their lives, so it is important they are not shut out of the opportunity to attend college and to fulfill their greatest possible potential. The College Choice program is an outstanding way to bring college within reach of our foster care youth, so I strongly commend Mayor Adams and the Administration of Children’s Services, led by Commissioner Jess Dannhauser, for launching this innovative initiative.”

“City College, like all CUNY schools, has an astounding track record in promoting social mobility, especially among vulnerable populations,” said **CCNY President Vincent Boudreau**. “The College Choice Program represents a unique opportunity for effective partnerships with ACS. A partnership that is precisely aligned with our deepest held values and core competencies, and we are truly excited at the chance to play a role in this exciting program.”

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