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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES \$17.8 MILLION TO REDUCE UNNECESSARY
JAIL TIME FOR PEOPLE WAITING FOR TRIAL**

Initiative will triple the number of individuals who can be supervised in the community instead of paying bail or being detained in jail while waiting for trial

\$13.8 million of funds are asset forfeiture money from Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s Office

NEW YORK—The de Blasio administration today announced \$17.8 million to supervise 3,000 eligible defendants safely in the community instead of detaining them in jail while they wait for trial. Titled “supervised release,” the initiative will permit judges to release defendants to a supervisory program that allows defendants to remain at home with their families and continue working while waiting for trial. This expands judges’ options beyond setting bail – which could lead to unnecessary detention if an individual is unable to pay – or releasing a defendant to the community without a system in place to ensure the defendant returns to court without reoffending.

This initiative is a key strategy the administration is pursuing to cut unnecessary pretrial detention and reduce reliance on money bail.

- Approximately 14 percent of all defendants who come through New York City courts are detained on bail at arraignment. While this percentage is low, it nevertheless amounts to 45,500 individuals detained on bail every year.
- While most detainees are high risk or facing serious charges, some are detained because they cannot afford relatively low bail amounts.
- Assigning a defendant to supervised release will be an option available to judges other than setting bail and participation will be free of charge for defendants.

“There is a very real human cost to how our criminal justice system treats people while they wait for trial,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Money bail is a problem because – as the system currently operates in New York – some people are being detained based on the size of their bank account, not the risk they pose. This is unacceptable. If people can be safely supervised in the community, they should be allowed to remain there regardless of their ability to pay.”

To implement this initiative, the de Blasio administration released today a Request for Proposals seeking bids from non-profit organizations to administer supervised release in every borough. The chosen providers will use a validated risk assessment tool, which is currently being selected, to determine eligible candidates and set an appropriate level of supervision. The target population will be individuals who have been assessed to not pose a public safety risk and would have a likelihood of having bail set. Supervision could range from regular check-ins in person or by text message and include connection to programs and services that address defendants' particular needs. This initiative is funded by \$4 million from the City and \$13.8 million from asset forfeiture money pledged by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s office.

This model expands upon the successful pilots currently operating in Queens since 2009 and Manhattan since 2013. In the Queens program, operated by the Criminal Justice Agency, 87 percent of clients successfully returned to court and completed the requirements of participating in supervised release. These programs currently have capacity to supervise 1,100 pretrial defendants; the initiative announced today will expand the total number of citywide slots to 3,400. 3,000 of the slots will be funded by the City, with the additional slots funded through other sources. The model also builds upon New York City's history of leading the nation in pre-trial justice reform. New York City became the birthplace of Release on Recognizance through an effort led by Herb Sturz, the founder of the Vera Institute. Release on Recognizance, which is now used in every courthouse across the nation, allows an individual at low risk of fleeing to remain in the community while waiting for trial without bail or supervision.

[The complete Request for Proposals issued today is available here.](#)

“My Office has long supported a change to the state’s antiquated law that only permits us to take an individual’s risk of flight into account when setting bail,” said **Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.** “Today, I’m calling on Albany to amend that law to enable prosecutors, judges, and defense attorneys to also evaluate dangerousness and risk of re-offending when making bail determinations, as is the practice in nearly every other state in this country. The use of an updated science-driven risk assessment tool will help actors in the criminal justice system better understand who can safely be released and supervised in the community while awaiting their day in court. We are proud to partner with the Mayor’s Office on this latest effort to make the city safer and the criminal justice system more fair.”

“Unnecessary detention imposes substantial costs on both the individuals behind bars and the City,” said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.** “Today’s announcement advances the administration’s commitment to use detention only when necessary and move toward a more fair and just system that promotes the public’s confidence.”

“This program moves the city towards a more fair and equitable criminal justice system by decreasing unnecessary detention for those individuals awaiting trial, while more accurately assessing public safety risk and the supervision necessary to prevent people from reentering the criminal justice system,” said **Police Commissioner William J. Bratton.**

“The Council fully supports any effort to reduce the number of low level offenders sent to Rikers Island solely because they are too poor to afford bail,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.** “The Administration’s program is another step in the right direction, and we thank the District Attorney’s office for their financial support of this valuable effort. The expansion of supervised

release programs should work hand in hand with the Council's Citywide bail fund to significantly reduce both the financial and human costs of needless incarceration."

"Far too many individuals awaiting trial who pose no risk to public safety are incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to post the bail amount set by the courts," said **New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman**. "Providing judges with more accurate and complete information about the defendants who come before them and instituting effective alternatives such as supervised release are critical steps in reducing overreliance on bail. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and District Attorney Vance for their leadership on this subject. Along with our continuing efforts to reform New York's outmoded bail statutes, the court system will cooperate fully with the program announced today."

"Mayor de Blasio's \$17 million commitment to provide vastly increased supervised release services to thousands of indigent pretrial detainees will lead to a significant reduction in the Rikers Island jail population," said **Herb Sturz, Senior Adviser at the Open Society Institute and Founding Director of the Vera Institute of Justice**. "Today's action by the Mayor will bring freedom to persons charged but not convicted; it will add strength to the presumption of innocence. Increased supervised release, generally performed by vetted community-based agencies, can as well strengthen ties between the community and the criminal justice system. Today's program will help keep families together, help accused persons retain jobs, and provide easier access to counsel."

"Mayor de Blasio's plan to expand the capacity to supervise those awaiting trial in the community rather than in jail is a huge step forward in making New York City a national model for pre-trial justice," said **Michael Jacobson, Executive Director of the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance**. "We know that there are thousands of people who are now being held pre-trial in the city's jails simply because they cannot afford to pay a few hundred dollars in bail. Instead, they are held at great expense in jail and frequently lose their jobs, have to drop out of school and lose daily contact with their children and families. Using risk as a standard for pre-trial detention as opposed to how much money someone has will increase public safety, reduce unnecessary and costly detention and make our pre-trial system more fair and just."

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