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Investing in Public Safety:

An Examination of the Programs that Did (and Did Not) Receive New Funding in the Mayor's Budget Proposals

Mayor Adams has made addressing issues of public safety one of the most prominent concerns of his nascent Administration. While crime in New York City had been at historic lows before and in the early months of the pandemic, a recent uptick in violent incidents on the streets and in the subways has brought about changes to perceptions of public safety citywide. In the Executive Budget, the Mayor added more than \$280 million in new needs and additions to existing programs aimed at promoting public safety in 2023 (all years refer to city fiscal years unless otherwise noted). This is in addition to more than \$90 million in new needs and additions for public safety the Administration added in the Preliminary Budget, totaling \$375 million in new public safety funds for 2023.

The Adams Administration has presented a broad definition of what constitutes public safety policies; in this brief IBO examines how much such initiatives have received in new or additional funding in the two budgets released since the Mayor took office. IBO draws on documents published by the Adams Administration, including the [Blueprint to End Gun Violence](#), the [Subway Safety Plan](#), and other stated policy priorities, in order to identify the public safety initiatives funded to date. IBO also examines what public safety initiatives have yet to receive new funding in the Preliminary or Executive Budgets, primarily by reviewing stated policy priorities as laid out by the Adams Administration, as well as areas of public safety investment called for by the City Council in its [Priority Safety Investments in Communities](#), released in advance of the Executive Budget, and in its [Response to the 2023 Preliminary Budget](#).

Increases by Funding Area

IBO has identified four general public safety priority areas for which the Mayor has increased funding in the Executive and Preliminary Budgets. The first two areas are homeless services and mental health outreach (\$177 million and \$77 million increases in 2023, respectively), which both received new funding under the Mayor's Subway Safety Plan. Programs and interventions for youth received a total of \$115 million in 2023. Anti-gun violence initiatives received the smallest amount of new funding relative to the other areas (\$5 million in 2023).

Homelessness and Mental Health. In February 2022, Mayor Adams announced his Subway Safety Plan as a key component to achieving public safety in response to increased crime on the subways. This plan largely focused on moving individuals experiencing homelessness, particularly those with mental illness, off the subways and streets and into shelter and connecting them with support.

Homeless Services. The Executive Budget added \$171 million annually for the Department of Homeless Services beginning in 2023 as part of street homelessness programming under the Subway Safety Plan. The annual \$171 million includes: \$140 million for stabilization and safe haven beds, \$19 million for drop-in centers with enhanced medical and behavioral support services, and \$12 million in additional funds for subway outreach. Stabilization and safe haven beds are a low-barrier type of shelter that the Adams Administration expects will be more appealing to unsheltered individuals than the city's traditional congregate shelters. The exact mix of safe haven and



Public Safety Additions in the Mayor's Preliminary and Executive Budgets Total \$1.4 Billion over the Plan Period				
<i>Dollars in thousands</i>				
	2023	2024	2025	2026
Executive Plan				
Public Safety-All Funds	\$281,915	\$239,279	\$230,129	\$230,129
Homelessness	177,061	\$177,061	\$177,061	\$177,061
Mental Health	77,315	\$35,191	\$35,191	\$35,191
Youth Programming & Interventions	22,683	\$22,683	\$13,533	\$13,533
Anti-Gun Violence	4,856	\$4,344	\$4,344	\$4,344
Preliminary Plan				
Public Safety-All Funds	\$92,842	\$92,842	\$92,842	\$92,842
Homelessness	-	-	-	-
Mental Health	-	-	-	-
Youth Programming & Interventions	\$92,842	\$92,842	\$92,842	\$92,842
Anti-Gun Violence	-	-	-	-
TOTAL-ALL PUBLIC SAFETY ADDITIONS	\$374,757	\$332,121	\$322,971	\$322,971
SOURCE: IBO analysis of Mayor's Office of Management and Budget preliminary and executive budgets				
<i>New York City Independent Budget Office</i>				

stabilization beds will be determined as the city contracts out the services.

In addition to increases in Department of Homeless Services spending, the Executive Budget added \$6 million for supportive housing services through the Human Resources Administration as an additional piece of the Subway Safety Plan. According to the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) this money will be used to hire additional staff to expedite placements into currently vacant supportive housing units. This brings total funding for all homeless services to \$177 million per year.

Mental Health. Under the umbrella of the Subway Safety Plan, the Mayor added a total of \$77 million for various mental health programs. Of this, \$40 million in 2023 and \$35 million in 2024 through 2026 are for various targeted mental health initiatives administered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Health + Hospitals, the city's public hospital system. One area receiving funding is eight Street Outreach and Wellness Vans to provide services to street homeless individuals and refer them to Health + Hospitals clinics, funded at \$19 million in 2023 and \$14 million in 2024 onward. About \$3 million per year has been added for Neighborhood Response Units, which are health-centered teams made up of medical staff, behavioral health clinicians, and peers that will perform outreach and engagement on the subway.

Also included as part of the Subway Safety Plan funding, the Mayor increased an initial investment in the previous administration's November Plan for the B-HEARD program

(the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division), which deploys social workers alongside FDNY EMS personnel when responding to mental health-related 911 calls. This funds an expansion of the B-HEARD program across high-need neighborhoods in Central Brooklyn, Eastern Queens, and the South Bronx. Starting in 2023, \$18 million is baselined in H+H, partially funded by a rollover of unspent funds from 2022, while funds have been added to the Fire Department's budget in 2023 only.

Youth Programming and Interventions. Youth programming and interventions make up the second largest share of public safety funding added to the 2023 budget, with some funds added in the Executive Budget, and most funding added in the Preliminary Budget.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is a long-standing program housed within the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) aimed at giving New Yorkers between the ages of 14 and 24 summer jobs throughout the city in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. With the release of the Preliminary Budget, Mayor Adams announced an expansion to the program, adding enough slots for 100,000 youth to have summer jobs through SYEP and other city workforce programs—an increase from 75,000 SYEP slots the previous year—at an additional cost of \$79 million in each year of the financial plan. In the press release announcing the expansion of the program, the Administration highlighted the role that summer jobs play as a tool for improving public safety, citing studies that have shown evidence that participation in the program is linked to less contact with the criminal legal system in

periods during and after program participation.¹ One such study found that the effect is concentrated among youth with prior contact with the criminal legal system.² About 300 of 90,000 SYEP slots are for youth involved with Cure Violence, a violence interruption and anti-gun violence program part of the City's Crisis Management System (CMS).³ CMS is an anti-gun violence program created in 2014 that is housed in the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and across other city agencies. CMS uses a network of credible messengers— typically these are mentors from the same neighborhood, with similar life experiences— to intervene and diffuse violence.

In the Executive Budget, adjustments were made to the DYCD portion of SYEP funding to transfer \$13 million to workforce programs in partner agencies such as the Department of Education (DOE), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), and Department of Probation (DOP); \$8 million in new funding was also added CUNY's budget for the program.

Another youth program to receive additional funding is ACS's Fair Futures Program. Since 2020, Fair Futures has offered coaching and other wraparound supports to youth in foster care, who are some of the most vulnerable youth in the city; for example, research has found that youth in foster care are less likely to graduate from high school or college than their non-foster care peers, and are more likely to become homeless. In the Blueprint to End Gun Violence, the Adams Administration framed the expansion of Fair Futures as a public safety initiative. The Preliminary Budget added \$13 million in city funds and the Executive Budget added over \$5 million in state funds to the Fair Futures budget, adding a total of over \$18 million and bringing its total annual funding to \$30 million. According to ACS, this is enough to expand the program to youth ages 21-26 who have aged out of foster care, as well as those involved in the juvenile justice system.

Lastly, for 2023 and 2024, \$9 million in federal funds were added to the Department of Education for Safe Supportive Schools, a group of initiatives that are still being finalized but are planned to involve contracting with community-based organizations that work on violence interruption, including de-escalation, mediation, and conflict resolution. This is similar to but separate from restorative justice work already being done in schools.

Anti-Gun Violence. Despite being a major component of Mayor Adams' messaging around public safety, specific anti-gun violence initiatives are one of the smallest areas

of public safety increases in the Adams Administration's first two budgets. The community-based anti-gun violence initiatives that have received funding span several agencies (all funds were added in the Executive Budget). These additions total \$3.2 million in 2022, just under \$5 million in 2023, and \$4.3 million in 2024 through 2026.

One piece of the new gun-violence related funding is for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's (OCME) dedicated gun crime unit. Almost \$2 million has been allocated for 2023, and the program is baselined at just over \$2 million going forward. The funding is for new staff lines in OCME labs to reduce the turnaround time for gun crime cases from 60 days to 30 days.

Another large piece of the anti-gun violence funding is located in the New York Police Department (NYPD) budget. Beginning in 2023, the NYPD will receive \$1.5 million in baselined funding to hire 20 additional civilian staff to support the Gun Violence Strategic Partnership (GSVP) as part of the Mayor's Blueprint to End Gun Violence. Also, as part of the Blueprint, \$1 million will be added to the NYPD budget for 2023 and an additional \$600,000 will be added over 2024 through 2026 to fund dashboard camera systems and install Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) software on vehicles for Neighborhood Safety Teams.

Within the Department of Probation, funds are added for Lead by Example Anti-Violence Programming, which is intended to provide support for those who have been or are on probation. This addition is baselined at \$150,000 each year. The Department of Probation is also budgeted to receive an additional \$300,000 annually for a Transformative Mentoring Alumni Program. This program follows the Arches Transformative mentoring model, which connects youth with mentors from similar backgrounds.

Notably, the programs added are mostly located outside of the Crisis Management System (CMS), which received much of the funding related to anti-gun violence under the prior administration.

Selected Areas Without Funding Increases

While this is not an exhaustive list, there are some notable aspects of public safety, identified by advocates, City Council, or even the Mayor himself, that did not receive any funding increases in this Executive Budget. IBO continues to track these areas:

Mental Health—Serious Mental Illness. While community-based mental health interventions like B-HEARD have

received additional funding from the Adams Administration, there are a few key areas for individuals with serious mental illness that have not. These include: funding for treatment of serious mental illness at Rikers Island as part of Correctional Health Services; teams of specialists that provide mobile outreach and care in community settings, such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams and Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams funded under DOHMH; or alcohol and substance abuse treatment and programming. Additionally, in the Blueprint to End Gun Violence, the Mayor called for funds to be reallocated from Thrive NYC, the signature but oft-criticized mental health program of the de Blasio Administration, to other aspects of mental health with more “direct need.” However, funding has yet to be reallocated from areas designated as Thrive to other initiatives.

Runaway and Homeless Youth. While the Subway Safety Plan focused largely on adults experiencing homelessness, there has not been a similar investment in increasing the beds for Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) through the Department of Youth and Community Development, especially for youth ages 21 to 24. The City Council called on the Administration to budget \$6 million for 120 additional RHY beds in its Response to the Preliminary budget.

Alternatives to Incarceration and Pretrial Detention. In its response to the Preliminary Budget, the City Council called for doubling spending on alternatives to incarceration and detention spending as part of a multi-pronged approach to public safety. The Council framed expanding this programming as a way to “hold people accountable” while limiting the exposure to the pretrial detention system, which they note risks exposure to violence in jail and often results in higher levels of recidivism.⁴ Alternatives to incarceration and detention programs have previously received increases in funding and scope to prepare for implementation of state bail reform in January of 2020, which ended the use of cash bail in most cases involving misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies. No additional funding has been added for alternatives to incarceration and detention in either of the Mayor’s budgets.

In the Blueprint to End Gun Violence the Administration outlines other reforms it has prioritized for the pretrial detention and the bail systems. These include adding the “dangerousness” of a defendant to existing guidelines for pretrial detention, which means taking into account, among other things, whether a defendant is perceived to pose a threat to public safety. The Administration expects that this would be an effective way to target alleged gun

violence offenses, while criminal justice reform advocates argue this could introduce more racial bias into the system. The Blueprint, in order to address the concern of racial and other biases and overall systemic fairness, calls for greater transparency in the court system via access to the decisions that judges make regarding pretrial detention.

Juvenile Justice. The Administration has not specifically discussed policies around juvenile justice outside of Raise the Age, even though it has been an important component of the city’s public safety system. Youth programming funded in the current budget is targeted at prevention such as job opportunities and anti-violence programming, with some slots set aside for those involved in Cure Violence (part of the Crisis Management System) or in Department of Probation programming. But the new budget does not include any additional funding for alternatives to detention or programming for youth in detention or placement. The Council’s Priority Safety Investments document called for \$5 million for secure detention programming that would help youth learn how to engage their communities.

For its part, the Adams Administration has called for amendments to roll back some of the Raise the Age legislation—which raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18 years of age—which would make some 16 and 17 year-olds accused of gun crimes culpable in adult court.

Courts and District Attorneys. The Blueprint to End Gun Violence addresses the roles of the five District Attorneys (DAs), public defenders (who receive funds at the city level through MOCJ contracts), and the courts in preserving public safety, especially in light of so many court delays related to Covid-19. The plan calls for changes to the discovery process to allow cases involving gun charges to move forward earlier, raising the penalty for gun trafficking, and other changes to speed up the court system. Many of these changes require the state to act rather than the city. At present, no additional funding has been proposed for DAs or public defenders under MOCJ contract. In addition, the City Council has called for providing the combined \$34 million requested by the DA offices to support existing crime reduction programming, and institute pay parity between DAs and public defenders.

Uniformed Police Headcount. While increasing uniform police headcount has historically been associated with public safety initiatives, it has not been endorsed by the City Council or the Mayor at the present time as many work to redefine public safety. Instead of adding officers, the Blueprint to End Gun Violence called for efficiency

within the existing headcount, partly by civilianizing some positions in order to make more officers available for patrol in neighborhoods. The Mayor's first two budget submissions maintain uniform police headcount at 35,060 officers through 2026, the same level as when Mayor Adams took office. The Adams Administration did increase the overall NYPD budget for 2023; however this funding is allocated for the civilian positions, equipment, and IT infrastructure as mentioned above, as well as for collective bargaining and overtime for existing officers.

result in funding some of the proposals that the Council has outlined as priorities. So far, most public safety funding under the Adams Administration has been concentrated in the areas of homelessness, mental health, and youth programming and a relatively small increase of funds for direct anti-gun violence programming. It remains to be seen what other areas from the Blueprint to End Gun violence or other public safety initiatives outside these areas will be funded at adoption and in the future.

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Next Steps

Following the release of the Executive Budget, the City Council will now work with the Adams Administration to negotiate and adopt the 2023 budget. This process may

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Endnotes

¹[New York City Mayor Eric Adams Announces Record 100,000 Summer Youth Employment Opportunities | City of New York \(nyc.gov\)](#)

²The Effects of Youth Employment on Crime: Evidence from New York City Lotteries; <https://www.nber.org/papers/w28373>

³Executive Budget Youth Services Oversight Hearing, 5/9/2022.

⁴[Response to the 2023 Preliminary Budget](#)