

1 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

2

FY26 BUDGET

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5

City Hall, Room 400
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
10:00 a.m.

6

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PRESENT:

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYETTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU
COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD
10 COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
11 COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE-RICHARDSON
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
12 COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILMAN CURTIS J. JONES, JR.
13 COUNCILMAN NICOLAS O'ROURKE
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.
14 COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS

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HELEN LOUGHEAD, CLERK

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Good morning, everyone.

4 This is the public and --

5 it's the public hearing and public

6 meeting of the Committee of the Whole

7 regarding Bill Nos. 250195, 250196,

8 250197, 250198, 250199, 250200,

9 250201, 250202, 250210, 250211,

10 250212. And resolution No. 250214.

11 Ms. Loughhead, will you please

12 call the role to take attendance,

13 please?

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember

15 Squilla. Councilmember Gauthier.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

17 Present.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember

19 Jones.

20 COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

21 Present.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember

23 Young.

24 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG:

1 Present.

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember

3 Driscoll.

4 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL:

5 Present.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember

7 Lozada.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Right

9 here.

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember

11 Bass.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember

14 Phillips.

15 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

16 Present.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember

18 O'Neill. Councilmember Gilmore-

19 Richardson.

20 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

21 RICHARDSON: Present.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember

23 Thomas. Councilmember Harrity.

24 Councilmember Ahmad.

1 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD:

2 Present.

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember

4 Landau.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

6 Present.

7 THE CLERK: Councilmember

8 Brooks.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

10 Present.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember

12 O'Rourke.

13 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

14 Present.

15 THE CLERK: Council President

16 Johnson.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 Present.

19 The quorum of the committee

20 is present and this hearing is now

21 called to order.

22 Ms. Loughhead, would you

23 please read the title of the

24 resolutions?

1 THE CLERK: Bill No. 250195,
2 an ordinance amending Chapter 19-1500
3 of the Philadelphia Code entitled Wage
4 and Net Profits Tax by revising
5 certain tax rates under certain terms
6 and conditions.

7 Bill No. 250196, an ordinance
8 adopting the operating budget for
9 fiscal year 2026.

10 Bill No. 250197, an ordinance
11 to adopt a fiscal 2026 capital budget.

12 Bill No. 250198, an ordinance
13 to adopt a capital program for the six
14 fiscal years 2026 through 2031
15 inclusive.

16 Bill No. 250199, an ordinance
17 amending chapter 19-2600 of the
18 Philadelphia Code entitled "Business
19 Income and Receipts taxes" to revise
20 certain tax rates and end certain
21 exclusions from the tax on receipts,
22 all under certain terms and
23 conditions.

24 Bill No. 250200, an ordinance

1 amending chapter 12-100, the
2 Philadelphia Code entitled Traffic
3 Code to revise the fee for the use of
4 parking meters all under certain terms
5 and conditions.

6 Bill No. 250201, an ordinance
7 amending Chapter 19-1800 of the
8 Philadelphia Code entitled School Tax
9 Authorization to provide for an
10 increase in the tax of the Board of
11 Education of the School District of
12 Philadelphia is authorized to impose
13 on real estate and amending Chapter
14 19-1300 entitled Real Estate Taxes to
15 establish an equivalent reduction in
16 the tax rate for the city real estate
17 tax, all under certain terms and
18 conditions.

19 Bill No. 250202, an ordinance
20 amending Section 19-1806 of the
21 Philadelphia Code entitled
22 Authorization of Realty Use and
23 Occupancy Tax to eliminate certain
24 exemptions all under certain terms and

1 conditions.

2 Bill No. 250210, an ordinance
3 amending Section 101001 of the
4 Philadelphia Code entitled "Fees of
5 Commissioner of Records" to increase
6 the portion of fees for the recording
7 of deeds and mortgages in relating
8 documents we use for housing trust
9 fund purposes under certain terms and
10 conditions.

11 Bill No. 250211, an ordinance
12 amending Chapter 19-1400 of the
13 Philadelphia Code entitled Realty
14 Transfer Tax by revising the rate of
15 the tax all under certain terms and
16 conditions.

17 Bill No. 250212, an ordinance
18 to amend Chapter 19-4400 of the
19 Philadelphia Code entitled Development
20 Impact Tax to end in position of the
21 tax under certain terms and
22 conditions.

23 Resolution No. 250214,
24 resolution providing for the approval

1 by the Council of City of Philadelphia
2 of a revised five-year financial plan
3 for the City of Philadelphia covering
4 fiscal years 2026 through 2030 and
5 incorporating revisions with respect
6 to fiscal year 2025, which is to be
7 submitted by the Mayor to the
8 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
9 Cooperation Authority pursuant to an
10 intergovernmental cooperation
11 agreement by and between the city and
12 the authority.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

14 Today, we will hold the
15 public hearing of the Committee of the
16 Whole to consider the bills read by
17 the clerk that constitute proposed
18 operating and capital spending
19 measures for fiscal year 2026, a
20 capital program and a forward-looking
21 capital plan for fiscal year 2026
22 through fiscal year 2031.

23 This morning we have
24 scheduled testimony from the Chief

1 Administrative Office, Office of Human
2 Resources, Office of Innovation and
3 Technology and Procurement.

4 Given the overlap in these
5 departments responsibilities, all
6 departments will be available for
7 questioning following testimony from
8 Miss -- from Chief Administrator
9 Officer Camille Duchaussee. Okay.

10 This afternoon we have
11 scheduled testimony from the
12 Department of Human Services and the
13 Mayor's Office of Education.

14 Ms. Loughead, will you please
15 call the first witness to testify from
16 the administration?

17 THE CLERK: Camille
18 Duchaussee, Chief Administrative
19 Officer.

20 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Good
21 morning. Is that good?

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 Yeah. Good morning. Just
24 state your name and please begin your

1 testimony.

2 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Good

3 morning. Members of -- Council

4 President Johnson, members of City

5 Council and colleagues, I am Camille

6 Duchaussee, Chief Administrative

7 Officer. Joining me today from the

8 Office of the CAO are Rose Smith-

9 DiFrancesco, Chief of Staff. Melissa

10 Andre, Executive Director of the

11 Office of Administrative Review.

12 Adrienne Moore, Director of the Office

13 for People with Disabilities. Andrew

14 Buss, Deputy CAO. Stephanie Reed,

15 Deputy CAO. Carol De Fries, Executive

16 Director City College for Municipal

17 Employment and Workforce Planning.

18 Shakeya Foreman employee Ombuds

19 person. Danita Reese, Director of the

20 Philadelphia Service Design Studio.

21 Tracy Bryant, Deputy Director of the

22 Office of Talents and Employee

23 Success, and Sandi Ramos, SEPTA Key

24 Advantage Program Manager.

1 I'm also joined by
2 commissioners of CAO's cluster
3 departments. Candi Jones, Chief Human
4 Resource Officer. Melissa Scott,
5 Chief Information Officer. LaShawnda
6 Tompkins, Deputy Procurement
7 Commissioner, and Ronald Hovey,
8 Procurement Commissioner Day 12. And
9 James Leonard, Records Commissioner,
10 who will provide testimony as well.

11 The FY26 budget for the
12 office of the CAO is critical to
13 fulfilling the promise of our office
14 and realizing the efficiency,
15 innovation, and transformation
16 necessary to make Philadelphia the
17 safest, cleanest and greenest big city
18 in the nation with access to economic
19 opportunity for all.

20 Through strategic investments
21 in workforce development, service
22 delivery, accessibility and
23 operational efficiency, and in support
24 of departments with whom CAO partners

1 to provide enterprise-wide
2 administrative support, which are
3 again, OHR, OIT, procurement records,
4 we are committed to strengthening city
5 government and ensuring it works
6 effectively.

7 In the past year, we realized
8 a first in the nation and significant
9 initiative, the City College for
10 Municipal Employment. CCME is a
11 crucial driver in the city's workforce
12 development strategy, coordinating
13 internal and external training
14 programs and resources to access and
15 develop the talent of Philadelphians
16 and city employees. Remove barriers
17 to employment, create clear pathways
18 to municipal careers that offer family
19 sustaining wages and build workforce
20 capacity and economic mobility by
21 ensuring that Philadelphians are
22 equipped with the skills needed for
23 the jobs of today and the future.

24 By investing in CCME, we not

1 only strengthen our city's workforce,
2 but also foster economic mobility for
3 residents across all communities. The
4 work of the Service Design Studio and
5 the Strategic Direction and
6 Transformation Units will continue to
7 prioritize the assessment development
8 improvement and innovation of resident
9 services and the operations of every
10 department.

11 The ongoing work of Executive
12 Order 224, prioritizing and improving
13 resident service delivery as well as
14 the successful implementation of CRMs
15 for the Office of Neighborhood and
16 Community Engagement, the Office of
17 Minority Business Success, and the
18 Mayor's Office and the creation of
19 lactation space finder app are
20 examples of the improvements and work
21 of this group.

22 Employee Engagement and
23 Infrastructure Unit and the Office of
24 Talent and Employee Success are

1 dedicated to fostering a workplace
2 culture that supports and engages our
3 employees. Through target internal
4 communication and professional
5 development, like the Elevate
6 Leadership Excellence Program, these
7 units have worked to improve alignment
8 between city leadership and our
9 workforce, ensuring that employees are
10 informed and empowered in their roles
11 and operational decision making is
12 informed by engagement with city --
13 with the city's workforce.

14 In FY26, we will expand
15 initiatives that support employee
16 well-being, professional development
17 and workplace inclusivity. The Office
18 of -- for People with Disabilities
19 will continue to build upon the city's
20 commitment to accessibility, ensuring
21 that Philadelphia is a city where all
22 residents can realize their potential
23 and take advantage of Philadelphia --
24 all that Philadelphia has to offer.

1 An example of their work
2 being the creation of the assistive
3 device tagging program, which ensures
4 Philadelphia residents are able to
5 retrieve their needed devices when
6 separated from its owner during
7 medical emergencies. And the Office
8 of Administrative Review has improved
9 hearing times and will be able to
10 further modernize with FY26 budget
11 commitments, making it easier for
12 Philadelphians to navigates
13 administrative hearings with fairness
14 and efficiency.

15 To ensure that the city
16 government operates with efficiency,
17 accountability, and fiscal
18 responsibility, the FY26 budget
19 request includes the resources
20 necessary to establish an internal
21 control and optimization unit to focus
22 on identifying operational
23 inefficiencies, improving
24 accountability and implementing

1 compliance best practices across
2 departments.

3 By strengthening internal
4 controls and optimizing workflows, we
5 will enhance service delivery, reduce
6 costs, and improve the overall
7 effectiveness of city government.

8 I am proud of the work of the
9 CAO and its partner departments and
10 ask that City Council support the
11 proposed budget. Without question,
12 the work of CAO, OHR, OIT, OPD,
13 procurement and records, supports
14 every department and directly impacts
15 the efficiency, transparency, and
16 effectiveness of city government.

17 We endeavor to strengthen
18 operations, invest in our workforce,
19 and drive innovation needed to make
20 Philadelphia a model of public
21 service. With the necessary
22 resources, we will continue working
23 toward becoming an employer of choice
24 and a government that residents can

1 truly see, touch, and feel. One that
2 is responsive, equitable, and built to
3 serve every Philadelphian.

4 I appreciate your time today,
5 and along with my colleagues, welcome
6 any questions you may have. I also
7 invite and ask Carol De Fries, our
8 executive director of CCME to provide
9 some opening comments on CCME. Sorry.

10 MS. DE FRIES: Just testing.
11 Okay. Great. Good morning, Council
12 President Johnson, members of City
13 Council, staff, and colleagues. I'm
14 Carol De Fries. I'm the executive
15 director of the City College for
16 Municipal Employment and Workforce
17 Programming.

18 The Mayor's vision and
19 standards for the City College for
20 Municipal Employment are clear: To be
21 a first in the nation workforce model
22 that will increasingly open pathways
23 to training, development and career
24 opportunities that poise all

1 Philadelphians to work, serve and
2 thrive in all areas of the economy,
3 particularly critical areas of need
4 within our city.

5 In a short time, CCME has
6 leveraged resources and partnerships
7 with the Big 4: The City's Community
8 College of Philadelphia, the School
9 District of Philadelphia and
10 Philadelphia Works, all to bring
11 opportunities for economic mobility to
12 its residents.

13 Understanding CCME as a broad
14 umbrella, combining CCME and
15 commerce's OWD, the Office of
16 Workforce Development, within CAO, to
17 ensure coordinated strategy, knowledge
18 and resources is very important.

19 The FY 2026 funding and
20 position allocations will allow our
21 combined team to shift our lens on
22 workforce across the internal and
23 external landscape to an enterprise
24 wide workforce leadership strategy and

1 implementation unit.

2 The Mayor's vision for the --
3 for the City College for Municipal
4 Employment, includes a well-
5 coordinated workforce ecosystem that
6 is poised to understand the vast needs
7 of the city enterprise as the third
8 largest employer in the city of
9 Philadelphia, the broader workforce
10 needs of Philadelphia's economy and
11 the major initiatives and investments
12 that the city brings to bear that can
13 drive workforce needs across key
14 sectors.

15 The unit will be able to
16 identify shared resource opportunities
17 and gaps in strategy. It will
18 continue to foster and grow
19 partnerships essential to maximizing
20 internal and external investments in
21 workforce development across
22 Philadelphia. I assure you that the
23 work of the Office of Workforce
24 Development in commerce will continue.

1 OWD is dedicated to
2 supporting employers and their talent
3 needs and will continue to manage
4 those efforts and more, including
5 supporting Commerce's Fair Chance
6 Hiring Initiative, the Workforce
7 Development Professionals Alliance, a
8 network of 24 quality workforce
9 organizations in the city and the
10 C2L-PHL plans for employer
11 engagements.

12 The unit will also support
13 the deployment of 10 million in
14 workforce funding, which will be
15 focused on external workforce
16 initiatives and investments and
17 removing barriers to opportunities for
18 life sustaining jobs in the
19 construction and building trades, the
20 life sciences in STEM, and grow both
21 existing and new partnerships with
22 external workforce partners such as
23 WIPSI, SAM State and Senior
24 Pre-Apprenticeship, SEIU, the Center

1 for Black Educator Development, among
2 others, and employers across
3 Philadelphia, particularly those
4 receiving KOZ benefits.

5 The significance and impact
6 of delivering on the Mayor's promise
7 on workforce is why I joined the
8 Parker administration and cannot be
9 overstated. We, the full team, look
10 forward to working with City Council
11 and our many partners to strengthen
12 and grow the city's workforce, which
13 supports all aspects of realizing a
14 safer, greener -- cleaner, greener
15 city with access to economic
16 opportunity for all Philadelphians.
17 Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

19 Thank you very much for your
20 testimony. I just want to get an idea
21 regarding the transferring of the
22 Commerce Department for the Workforce
23 program under the Office of Chief
24 Administrative Office, just to get an

1 idea of the reasoning behind the
2 transfer, and then how are you
3 integrating that workforce program or
4 other workforce programs throughout
5 the city of Philadelphia that's going
6 to be under CAO?

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So the idea
8 as Carol mentioned, is really for CCME
9 and it's the office of CCME and
10 Workforce Planning, right? And it's
11 to capture all workforce development
12 work that's being done across the
13 city.

14 One thing that we very early
15 on recognized as we were trying to
16 stand up CCME and make sure that
17 workforce development work was moving
18 as efficiently as possible, was that
19 there were a lot of great work that's
20 being done across the city in
21 departments, that if coordinated, I
22 think would have improved outcomes.

23 We have great outcomes with a
24 number of our partners. You know,

1 Streets Department and their future
2 track program, what's going on with
3 Fleet. There are a lot of great
4 programming that's going on, but the
5 consolidation of it, definitely the
6 centralization of it without impacting
7 its current effectiveness was a
8 significant goal of CCME.

9 Now, when you pull back and
10 you look at the work that was being
11 done in commerce, in coordination
12 with, you know, their external
13 partners, a lot of external partners,
14 we were tapping a number of the same
15 external partners.

16 And so the idea behind
17 pulling the Office of Workforce
18 Development into the CCME and
19 Workforce Planning Office was just to
20 change the perspective, to make sure
21 that we are taking a higher level
22 view. We are seeing where there are
23 opportunities for partnership, we are
24 seeing where we can -- where the

1 economy of scale can be employed and
2 also we can recognize where there are
3 gaps.

4 We certainly have a very bold
5 vision here of making sure that all
6 Philadelphians have an opportunity and
7 that we are creating economic mobility
8 across the city in all communities,
9 but there are gaps in that. And in
10 changing our focus and putting the two
11 together so that we can see across all
12 of the work that's being done, not
13 only in the city, but in our
14 partnerships external to the city, I
15 think we have better outcomes.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 So now it'll be housed in the
18 CA0. And in terms of Commerce,
19 because I know when Commerce just came
20 here last week when we kicked off the
21 five-year plan, they talked about
22 their role with workforce development,
23 making sure we are addressing the
24 vacancies. Going out into the

1 community, doing the job fairs, having
2 the mobile -- they have a mobile
3 employment bus that goes throughout
4 the city that hopefully we'll have 10
5 of them in each councilmatic district
6 so we can kind of speed up erasing
7 poverty here in the city of
8 Philadelphia. But I just -- so are
9 there two tracks they're going to be
10 moving or are you going to be over top
11 of all of it now under CAO?

12 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Right. So
13 we're over the top.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
15 Okay.

16 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: But there
17 are two tracks, right?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 That's where I'm going.

20 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: The work of
21 the Office of Workforce Development
22 that has typically and has been housed
23 in Commerce, that work continues.
24 We're a client of theirs, just like

1 there are a number of other parties,
2 Commerce being one of them is a client
3 of that unit. And so that work
4 doesn't change.

5 I think the -- the benefit
6 here is that we can blend resources.
7 We can, again, leverage its
8 multiplication by addition, right?
9 Where you're adding to a department
10 and you're leveraging across that
11 entire department all of the resources
12 that we have.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

14 Okay.

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I don't know
16 if, Carol, if you want to say anything
17 else here.

18 MS. DE FRIES: I'm happy to.
19 I think that I just would say from
20 personal experience and since I
21 started, I've been working very
22 closely with the Office of Workforce
23 Development basically on a daily
24 basis.

1 And so the workforce
2 ecosystem is very tied to one another.
3 So everything that we're -- we would
4 be doing internally is also tied to
5 what happens externally. And so it
6 was very clear through that process,
7 that we had to be in constant
8 coordination regarding any investments
9 that we were making internally in the
10 city to support the hiring needs of
11 the city of Philadelphia, in addition
12 to what was going on externally.

13 And in fact, like one of my
14 first experiences was how we could
15 work across multiple departments and
16 the external partners to submit a
17 proposal to William Penn grant --
18 William Penn Foundation, because there
19 were multiple of the same needs that
20 we needed to coordinate in that
21 submission.

22 So it was very clear that
23 their work needs to be at a higher
24 level looking across both internal and

1 external employer needs, plus the city
2 as an employer and what our needs are
3 as well.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

5 Okay. Now, part of the
6 budget process for this year for CAO
7 is \$300,000 for software for your
8 databases. Can you just give us an
9 idea? That's your largest actual
10 request so -- and I think upgrading
11 technology is a good thing, but just
12 give us an update for the record on
13 how that's going to be utilized,
14 please.

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.
16 So less an update of technology, but a
17 continuation of the technology that
18 we're -- in this contracts that we're
19 using right now, which are Qualtrics,
20 which is a kind of a survey platform
21 that allows us to engage our employees
22 in a multitude of ways. Our Quickbase
23 program is the program that allows us
24 to take manual processes within

1 different departments and digitize
2 them.

3 And over the course of FY25,
4 I believe there were 15 different
5 projects that we took on to include
6 some of the ones mentioned in my
7 opening testimony to create apps that
8 are better utilize and take in
9 information in a more efficient way
10 for different departmental partners.

11 And then lastly, we have
12 Envisio, which is a project tracking
13 tool that we have used to, again,
14 gauge the work that -- an ongoing work
15 track and hold accountable ourselves
16 the work that we're doing in service
17 improvement.

18 So any project that we have
19 relative to service delivery
20 improvement is put in Envisio and it
21 allows us to track, and communicate
22 with our partners -- our departmental
23 partners.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 Okay. Thank you. That data
2 also shows that minority women,
3 disabled businesses, participants
4 rates dropped from 40 percent in FY24
5 to 27 percent in FY25. So can you
6 give us update on the reasons for the
7 declines and also measures being taken
8 on to make sure we are addressing
9 equity when it comes to contracting
10 services because you know, obviously
11 we are the largest poor city in
12 America.

13 In order for us to erase that
14 moniker we have to make sure we're
15 building generational wealth and
16 making sure the process is equitable
17 in terms of everybody having a chance
18 to participate. And it also reflects
19 what the city of Philadelphia looks
20 like in terms of our business
21 practices.

22 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I'm going to
23 turn to our very new procurement
24 commissioner, Ronald Hovey, but before

1 doing that, I do want to kind of share
2 your sentiments, right? That we have
3 some work to do. And one of the
4 things that we are very much keyed in
5 on is the work that we've been doing
6 in concert with Majority Leader
7 Gilmore-Richardson's office, in terms
8 of improving the way we -- the
9 procurement process works.

10 We are very clear that the
11 administrative burdens of contracting
12 with the city of Philadelphia has a
13 disparate impact on some of our
14 smaller and minority owned, disabled
15 enterprise owners have with the city
16 of Philadelphia.

17 So we are working very
18 diligently to make sure that -- to the
19 extent that across the board, we are
20 creating easier systems, less
21 administrative burden, less costly --
22 taking less of a toll on working with
23 the city of Philadelphia, that we are
24 making improvements in that space.

1 I'll also say that by and
2 large, the work of monitoring and
3 assessing and prescribing
4 participation rates, is not the work
5 of the Procurement Department, but
6 under the Office of --

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
8 OEO.

9 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: -- Business
10 Impact, yes. OEO rests within the
11 Office of Business Impact and Economic
12 Growth. And so that is a space where
13 we partner with them. And I don't
14 believe that there's anyone here from
15 that office today to speak directly to
16 the participation rates, but I will
17 turn it over very briefly to --

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 But you would know practices
20 in terms of what you're doing to
21 improve them, correct?

22 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I'm sorry,
23 sir.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I

1 said, but you would -- you would have
2 practices on how you're going to go
3 about improving them, correct?

4 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

6 Because OEO would just
7 monitor the number, but I would think
8 if you-all are talking together --

9 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

11 -- I would think they would be a game
12 plan and say, hey, these numbers
13 aren't increasing for black and brown
14 women. We are actually going
15 backwards. And I would think an alarm
16 was set off and say, whoa, whoa, whoa,
17 we're not moving aggressively forward
18 --

19 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yeah. So --

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 -- in this area.

22 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yeah. And I
23 agree. And I think one of the things
24 that I'm particularly aware of is that

1 we've taken a step back and looked at,
2 hey, what are -- have been our
3 challenges, our successes relative to
4 our movement in that regard? And I
5 think that was a major impetus for --
6 not I think, I know that was a major
7 impetus for how we've structured that
8 space.

9 And so right now we do have,
10 again, a fairly new appointee to the
11 Office of Business Impact and Economic
12 Growth. That person will drive our
13 efforts and making sure that we --

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
15 Okay. Got you.

16 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: And if that
17 is Nadir Jones. I actually think that
18 I've seen him in the -- in the hearing
19 room today, but again, he started
20 yesterday, so.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Okay. All right. Understood.

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So, but he
24 will have a very particular role in

1 driving our efforts in that regard.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Okay. Good.

4 MR. HOVEY: Thank you,
5 Camille. So I'm Ron Hovey from the
6 Procurement Department, I'm the new
7 commissioner. Today is my 12th day.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 Oh, congratulations. Welcome.

10 MR. HOVEY: Thank you. And I
11 come here also with my colleagues,
12 LaShawnda Tompkins, she's my deputy
13 for administration and Janira Barroso,
14 she's my deputy for services, supplies
15 and equipment and public works.

16 So an answer to your
17 question, as Camille said, OEO it's
18 my, you know, it's my understanding
19 and the way the operation is set up
20 that it's a separate organization.
21 And by the way, Nadir just -- Nadir
22 just called me this morning. We've
23 met a few times now and he's -- he and
24 I talked about getting together to

1 discuss this very issue.

2 So, you know, based on my
3 sort of time in the seat, I don't have
4 direct prescriptions today. But I can
5 tell you, you know, it's important for
6 those two organizations. And
7 historically, sort of the outward
8 facing -- the outward facing business
9 diversity function is either within or
10 very closely adjacent to procurement
11 organizations. So I think
12 historically it may have been more at
13 arm's length, but I would like to see
14 that work much more closely.

15 Also, you know, there may be
16 some variation in terms of reality
17 versus data captured because I've seen
18 that there's a fair amount of sort of
19 manual effort in collecting and
20 aggregating this data. So I'm looking
21 forward to some of the new systems
22 that are coming in place to increase
23 the veracity of the data so that we,
24 you know, we can make more much -- I'm

1 very data driven, so, I want to make
2 much more sort of data informed
3 decisions. That's basically it at
4 this point.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

6 Okay. All right. Thank you
7 very much. We will definitely find
8 time in the near future as you get
9 your legs under you to readdress this
10 issue as well as with the new
11 appointee for, I guess, it's the
12 Office of, you'll call them Diversity
13 and Business Impact, or, can you say
14 it for the record, the new position.

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I'm sorry.
16 Business Impact and Economic Growth.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
18 Economic Growth. So there is no more
19 Office of Equal Opportunity. OEO will
20 be --

21 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: The Office
22 of Economic Opportunity will build --
23 will be built underneath, will be
24 folded into the broader umbrella.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 Okay. Cool. I think I'm
3 familiar with that.

4 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: It's not
5 going away.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 Okay. That approach is cool.
8 Just because the climate right now
9 that we are in, right? And some folks
10 trying to roll back the hands of time,
11 and so we are not on the front line
12 addressing this in a diligent manner
13 and being very, very intentional.

14 But I also have to be quite
15 frank, even if we wasn't in this
16 climate, right, we're the poorest city
17 in America, largest city. And the
18 only way we're going to address the
19 disparities that we see in the city of
20 Philadelphia is by being very, very
21 intentional by making sure that black
22 and brown and women owned businesses
23 have a seat at the table.

24 So however we can be partners

1 in that mission, we are here, but I
2 just want us go on the record and say
3 we need to be laser-light focused on
4 eradicating poverty by providing
5 opportunities for small black and
6 brown and women owned businesses.

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I agree.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 Last question -- last
10 question before I go to my colleagues.
11 Very popular program here in City
12 Council, which is the SEPTA Key
13 program. Their program is going to be
14 moving from --

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: It's a lot
16 of money.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 -- the CAO Office to the
19 Office of Human Resources, but at a
20 different funding level.

21 And so, I want to get an idea
22 of, over the last two years, the
23 program cost the city \$9 million and
24 now it's costing \$5 million. So I

1 want to kind of get clarity on, if
2 this reflects the change in number of
3 employees served or service level? Or
4 does it better reflect the actual need
5 of the actual program?

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So I would
7 say, first of all, the move makes a
8 lot of sense, right? Our Office of
9 Human Resources does a phenomenal job
10 with managing our employees benefits
11 and their total rewards package. And
12 this is very much in alignment with
13 that, making sure that the benefits
14 that our employees enjoy, are sitting
15 within our benefits unit in OHR.

16 Right now we are still in
17 conversations with the -- with SEPTA.
18 The funding, again, I think is
19 commensurate with our need. And as we
20 move forward, we will continue to
21 provide this very, very necessary
22 benefit, very worthwhile benefit to
23 all of our workforce. That has not
24 changed. Our commitment to that has

1 not changed.

2 Again, we do understand and
3 appreciate the ability to put more
4 dollars in the pockets of our
5 workforce and we are committed to
6 that.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

8 Okay. Because the interns
9 and City Council, this is a very, very
10 popular program.

11 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Across the
12 city it's a very popular program.
13 Yes.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

15 No, on a serious note. And
16 then I'm just going to take a matter
17 of personal privilege for
18 Councilmember Harrity or O'Rourke or
19 Jones. Any points of information at
20 this moment regarding the SEPTA Key
21 program before I start calling on
22 members? Member Jones? And this was
23 actually your baby, sir. So Member
24 Jones.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: It's
2 our baby. And I would -- I would want
3 to know, does it just deal with city
4 employees now and does it deal with
5 quasi-governmental employees as well,
6 such as, the Defender's Association?
7 Is that included?

8 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I will ask
9 Sandi Ramos, our program -- SEPTA Key
10 program manager to come up in response
11 to specifically who it covers. But
12 the SEPTA Key Program is specific to
13 the city's workforce, employees within
14 the city of Philadelphia to make a
15 distinction between the Zero Fare
16 Program, which is a program that our
17 city residents can benefit from.

18 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So the
19 defenders -- I'm sorry. The defenders
20 have to go back and forth to state
21 road to defend citizens that are
22 accused of crimes. One of the -- and
23 they're underpaid. And I said that, I
24 know she's watching somewhere.

1 They're underpaid. One of the perks
2 is that they can get to their clients
3 back and forth.

4 And so the distinction
5 between them not being a proper city
6 department and being a non-profit, is
7 one only made in our structure, not in
8 the minds of the public. So I wanted
9 the specifics of that.

10 MS. RAMOS: Good morning.
11 Sandi Ramos, Project Manager, SEPTA
12 Key Advantage. So to answer your
13 question, councilman, contractors are
14 not currently participating in this
15 program. There are a number of
16 contracted agencies who work alongside
17 city employees. The Defenders
18 Association is one of those, but there
19 are few.

20 And so because of that, we
21 would be opening the door to a pretty
22 significant population. And so at the
23 moment it is limited specifically to
24 city employees.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Well,
2 that's something I think we should
3 address. The Defender's Association
4 takes on 44,000 accused, you remember
5 that, right? Forty-four thousand
6 accused individuals a year, many of
7 them who are incarcerated up on State
8 Road. And with the different --
9 differential between what they make
10 versus the DA versus the city
11 solicitor's office, it's a small perk
12 for them to not have to go in their
13 pockets to see their own clients.

14 So I would -- and I know
15 that's not your decision, but I'm
16 encouraging my colleagues to think
17 about that. That if justice is to be
18 done, we can't price out the
19 Defender's Association from being
20 effective at their jobs. So what
21 other contracting agencies are not
22 included? Do you have a list of them?

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So I think
24 it's easier to flip it. The benefit

1 right now is availed to city
2 employees, not contractors. And so
3 any agency organization with whom we
4 contract, that support the work of the
5 city of Philadelphia, we are not
6 currently availing the SEPTA Key
7 Advantage Program to that group.

8 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Okay.

9 So we need to take a look.

10 We need to do our job and take a look
11 at who is not included, who we
12 consider essential partners.
13 Essential partners. And I don't know,
14 I remember quasi-governmental
15 agencies, is it the Redevelopment
16 Authority or PHDC, people that we
17 partner with that go out into the
18 communities everyday to provide those
19 services.

20 That might be the difference
21 between someone losing an employee
22 because, you know what, this isn't
23 just worth it to me. In light of all
24 of the vacancies we have, this is a

1 perk, this is a benefit that I think
2 should be expanded to maintain our
3 workforce.

4 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: And we're
5 happy to continue having
6 conversations, again, as -- I mean,
7 we're sitting here because it's a
8 budget conversation, right? And to
9 the extent that we are able to
10 leverage the budget that is made
11 available to us to improve the
12 efficiency and partnerships that we
13 have, we will. But at the same time,
14 we understand that this is a benefit
15 that has a substantial cost associated
16 with it. And we are doing everything
17 in our power to make sure that we can
18 continue to provide this very
19 necessary, very worthwhile benefit to
20 our workforce.

21 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So some
22 years ago we subcontracted out DHS's
23 responsibility to CUAs. These
24 individuals perform the same basic

1 services that social workers used to
2 perform, but now are quasi-
3 contractors. It does not make sense
4 to me. We are being penny wise, and
5 in my opinion, pound foolish, if we
6 don't recognize the high degree of
7 turnover that can happen when the
8 little things, not the mountain you
9 have to climb, but the pebbles that
10 get in your sandals on the way up the
11 mountain.

12 So we might want to take a
13 look at all of those subcontractors to
14 see if it makes sense in order to
15 reduce turnover to include that
16 benefit. Thank you, Mr. President.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 Thank you. All right. Let's
19 rock and roll.

20 Member O'Rourke and then
21 Member Harrity.

22 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

23 Thank you, Mr. President.

24 And thank you for allowing this moment

1 just to clarify. I hear that there is
2 the budget reduction on this point. I
3 understand -- I think I understand why
4 that's the case. Just clarifying, you
5 are affirming that this key program
6 and benefit will continue for all, at
7 least currently eligible employees in
8 FY26 and beyond?

9 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: Correct.
10 For FY26.

11 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Oh,
12 but not necessarily beyond? For --
13 you can say for FY26.

14 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: The
15 intention is to continue it beyond.

16 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
17 Okay.

18 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: But again,
19 year after year, we --

20 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
21 Understood. Is anyone going
22 to -- considering the budget
23 reduction, is anyone going to lose or
24 be cut out of this benefit?

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Is anyone
2 going to lose? I'm sorry, I missed
3 the word.

4 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Is
5 anyone going to be cut from this
6 benefit -- from this -- due to the
7 budget cut, will anyone lose this as a
8 result of this budget cut? Anybody at
9 all?

10 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: No.

11 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
12 Okay. Thank you very much.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
14 Real quick point of

15 information, Councilmember Bass.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
17 you, Mr. President. The follow-up on
18 Councilmember Jones line of
19 questioning. And as he was speaking,
20 it dawned on me, you know, how so many
21 folks who have the SEPTA Key card may
22 not need it. You know, we have access
23 to it, but may not need it, and there
24 are some people who really need it and

1 who do not have access.

2 I would be more than willing
3 to give my SEPTA Key card to, you
4 know, a public defender. And I think,
5 you know, my colleagues as well. But
6 I think as you're looking at the
7 program and looking at where to make
8 cuts, you have to look at who's
9 getting it and who doesn't need it and
10 who needs it and isn't getting it.

11 And even if they're not a --
12 if they're a contracted agency, like a
13 public defender's office, they're
14 doing a city service. They may not be
15 a full city agency or full city
16 department, but they're certainly
17 doing a very valuable service for the
18 citizens of the city of Philadelphia.

19 And so there's got to start
20 being some equity there and with other
21 departments. So as we, you know, just
22 look at, you know, how these funds are
23 spent, I just think we need to be
24 mindful of, you know, who's already

1 got it and, you know, who really needs
2 it. So thank you, Mr. President.

3 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Agreed.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

5 Member Harrity, and then
6 we'll go into rounds.

7 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Thank
8 you, Council President. Just real
9 quick, since you brought it up, Zero
10 Fare. I mean, how many actual
11 citizens are going to be affected by
12 this? How many actually signed up for
13 the program? And what was the cost of
14 that?

15 Because we really haven't
16 even finished the pilot yet, and this
17 program is being cut. And it's just
18 one more thing we're taking away from
19 people who probably need it the most.
20 So if you could just give me some
21 numbers just for points of information
22 there.

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So
24 Councilmember, I would be happy to get

1 back to you on that. Zero Fare is not
2 a program that's under the purview of
3 the CAO, but absolutely can get you
4 that information.

5 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Okay.

6 Thank you. Thank you,
7 Council President.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 Okay. We're going into
10 official round one. The Chair
11 recognizes Councilmember Phillips.

12 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

13 Thank you, Council President.

14 OHR has committed to
15 collaborating with HR offices across
16 departments to improve transaction
17 accuracy and efficiency. What
18 mechanisms will be used to track and
19 enforce compliance with new process
20 improvements, and how will
21 accountability be insured across
22 decentralized HR functions?

23 MS. JONES: Good morning,
24 everyone. Sorry. Good morning,

1 everyone. Candi Jones, Chief Human
2 Resources Officer. So great question.
3 So the Office is responsible for that
4 oversight. There are some challenges
5 with the current structure. Each HR
6 -- each department has their own HR
7 manager.

8 As a new leader for the
9 Office of Human Resources, my goal is
10 actually to centralize some of those
11 functions, right? So taking a very
12 close look at each agency, working
13 with them to establish metrics, to
14 establish different expectations, to
15 have a higher level of oversight and
16 accountability of those agencies.

17 A part of the budget asks for
18 the Office of Human Resources
19 includes, I think \$50,000 for HR
20 University. And that is a significant
21 step towards ensuring that the
22 decentralized HR offices that there
23 are -- there is a level of consistency
24 and equity across those -- across

1 those offices.

2 So I say -- I tell the story
3 all the time, right? The candidate
4 experience in any department should be
5 very, very similar, if not the same.
6 And right now, we're seeing that
7 employees that are hired may
8 experience a very different process
9 for HR. And so I'm looking to have
10 that consistency.

11 And I think to your point,
12 that will allow my office, the Office
13 of Human Resources, to have that
14 additional oversight, provide
15 resources and training to the
16 decentralized HR managers so that we
17 can really move forwards as one -- as
18 one consistent team.

19 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

20 Yeah. Thank you. One of the
21 reasons why I asked that question is
22 that I'm a little concerned about
23 certain positions that require some
24 level of, like, innovation when it

1 comes to hiring and providing support
2 to those departments.

3 For example, the city of
4 Philadelphia has about a year backlog
5 in tree removal. And a lot of that
6 has to do with the fact that we're
7 trying to find the right people who
8 are qualified to remove trees. And
9 supposedly that's hard to find in the
10 Parks & Rec Department.

11 So the reality is that how do
12 we begin, if we're going to do the --
13 you know, the community college route
14 for training, what are you doing to
15 help with, like, finding ways to maybe
16 train people or come up with new
17 innovative strategies to help us get
18 to that level of service that people
19 are looking for in terms of tree
20 removal?

21 MS. JONES: So two things.
22 We do partner very specifically and
23 intentionally with city departments
24 for what we consider to be hard to

1 fill positions. So part of that is
2 recruitment, part of that is working
3 with those departments to source those
4 particular candidates.

5 And then we also have a
6 significant partnership under CCME,
7 right? Because the goal of CCME is to
8 lead individuals to city employment.
9 But we work with them to identify
10 these hard to fill positions, figuring
11 out which pathways are, sort of, right
12 for the CCME programming, and then
13 working with Carol De Fries and her
14 team to be able to then link those
15 individuals seamlessly into city
16 employment.

17 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

18 Thank you. I mean, I
19 appreciate that. And, however, one of
20 the things that I would also -- one of
21 my last questions and comments was
22 basically, it would be nice for us to
23 get to our emails and also to the
24 public to get more updates around

1 where people -- where we are with
2 hiring. You know, every couple
3 months, you know, positions, letting
4 us know, hey, we're struggling with
5 this position.

6 You know, maybe we can go out
7 to our community and say, hey, here
8 are the open positions that are
9 available, you know, that you're still
10 struggling to hire. I just feel,
11 like, that innovation level has to be
12 there. And I think it's -- your
13 hiring process could -- is too closed
14 for a very public, you know, the city
15 is a very public space. But I just
16 think we have to open it up a little
17 bit better.

18 MS. JONES: Agreed. And
19 we're happy to increase our
20 communication with council on the
21 events that we're doing in the
22 community's, current openings, for
23 positions. But I agree that
24 partnership is essential to be able to

1 kind of increase our public facing
2 approach with the community.

3 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

4 Yeah. And I would like to
5 have an agreement between -- this is
6 the last thing I'm going to say. I
7 would like to have an agreement
8 between your department and every
9 District Councilmember this coming
10 year, that you're going to have
11 several bus stops where you -- or
12 something. I mean, career fairs,
13 like, that you organize, not that we
14 organized. We got enough to organize.
15 I'm organizing an emergency meeting
16 about a rec center that just was shot
17 up, unfortunately. So, but like I
18 said, it's just important that you all
19 organize it cause that's your role and
20 responsibility.

21 MS. JONES: We are happy to
22 do that. We do have a listing of all
23 of the -- so in addition to the 154
24 events we did last year, we do have a

1 listing, and we're quite booked for
2 this year as well. But that includes
3 each district, right? And so we can
4 share that information to let you know
5 where we're going to be, whether
6 that's a partnership with a school or
7 a community agency.

8 So we are scheduled to have
9 the bus out in the community for the
10 upcoming recruitment season. So we're
11 happy to do that.

12 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: I
13 didn't know anything about it, so
14 we'll have to figure out how to
15 communicate better there, too.

16 MS. JONES: Will do.

17 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: All
18 right. Let's do it. Thank you,
19 Council President. Thank you, Candi.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 Thank you. The Chair
22 recognize Councilmember Brooks.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank
24 you. My first group of questions is

1 for CAO. Your office recently led the
2 administration's decision to end the
3 Work from Home systems that were in
4 place since the pandemic. And when
5 this was announced, we saw surrounding
6 counties advertise more flexible work
7 from Home policies.

8 The question is, how were
9 these policies received by the
10 workforce? And do you expect the
11 decision to be revisited in the near
12 future?

13 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: How were the
14 policies received? I think the
15 policies were received, I mean,
16 respectfully and candidly with some
17 skepticism, right? Again, working
18 from home is something that I would
19 say a good percentage of 20 percent --
20 at least 20 percent of our workforce
21 became accustomed to and had
22 opportunities to utilize during the
23 pandemic.

24 And so there was a pivot that

1 needed to be made. We want to make
2 sure that we are creating spaces where
3 equal opportunity is centered and
4 having all of our teammates in person
5 and able to talk, share, collaborate,
6 take advantage of opportunities is
7 very important to Mayor Parker. And
8 just a sound HR practice, to be frank.

9 So I think the conversation
10 continues and we have definitely seen
11 the settling in period. The contacts
12 that we were experiencing in CAO have
13 definitely decreased.

14 And I think we have instilled
15 and embedded in all of our processes
16 better supports that allow our
17 workforce to be able to come back to
18 work. We've already had a significant
19 conversation around SEPTA Key
20 Advantage. The standing up of our
21 wealthy benefit, our just in time --
22 just in case emergency care for
23 dependents and elderly family members.
24 We've stood that up.

1 And so we will continue to
2 assess what opportunities we have for
3 providing supports to our workforce.
4 That was going to continue regardless
5 of whether our employees are on-site
6 or off site. At the end of the day,
7 our mission in CAO is to provide more
8 engaged, a more supportive work
9 environment. We want to be a model
10 employer, and so we are going to
11 continue to assess those opportunities
12 and those supports that we put in
13 place.

14 Every year we go through a
15 review of our benefits package. And
16 Marsha Greene-Jones, who's the deputy
17 -- a deputy OHR -- of OHR within the
18 benefits unit, does an extraordinary
19 job. I'm sorry. Yeah.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And I
21 just have one part. So one of the
22 justifications for the Work From Home
23 policy was the impact on Center City
24 businesses. And I was wondering, have

1 you been tracking the impact of this
2 decision on Center City business,
3 traffic, and just overall quality of
4 life?

5 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: So
6 respectfully, that was not one of the
7 factors for the decision in -- for the
8 city's decision to return our
9 employees to the office. Of course,
10 the hope and the anticipation was that
11 having more foot traffic, having more
12 employees, whether there are employees
13 or any other organization's employees
14 in Center City and in the city in
15 general, would have a benefit. I
16 certainly can provide any information
17 to you in regard to the impact it's
18 had on safety and the economy within
19 the Center City district.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yes,
21 that would be helpful.

22 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: Sure.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank
24 you so much.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 Okay. Councilmember -- oh,
3 he left. Councilmember O'Rourke.

4 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

5 Thank you, Mr. President, and
6 good morning now.

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Good
8 morning.

9 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I
10 know we kind of got a jump start
11 there, but I'm so grateful to have
12 you-all here this morning. Thank you
13 for being here.

14 I want to start my questions
15 today on the city's workforce. The
16 lifeblood of our city services, as it
17 were. These are the folks who answer
18 our calls to 311, the folks who we
19 pave our streets, the folks who
20 maintain our parks, staff, our
21 libraries, collect our garbage in some
22 cases twice a week, a hat tip to the
23 administration on that initiative.

24 In order to provide the best

1 services we can to Philadelphians,
2 we've got to be an excellent employer.
3 And I've heard you already mentioned
4 this already. We've talked a lot in
5 our first week of hearings about
6 recruitment, getting folks through the
7 door, upskilled hired up, but I'm also
8 worried about retention. Keeping our
9 dedicated public servants with us,
10 particularly right now.

11 So I have a few questions
12 about the investments that we make in
13 our workers and their employee
14 satisfaction. Employees matter.

15 President Johnson has already
16 gotten us lifted on the SEPTA Key
17 Advantage Program question. And I
18 just want -- I did want to just verify
19 and get on the record that it was a
20 fact that they would all currently
21 eligible employees and FY26 would
22 still remain getting that program and
23 there would not be any cuts. So that
24 is very encouraging.

1 I understand that last year
2 as a part of a broader effort to
3 assess employee engagement and
4 satisfaction across the departments,
5 an employee experience survey was
6 conducted, which is great. And since
7 we're over a year in this -- to this
8 administration, I'm eager to hear what
9 came up from that.

10 Could you provide a little
11 bit of background on this employee
12 experience survey, who received it,
13 when was it fielded? How was it
14 designed?

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure. So
16 our employee engagement survey was
17 launched in May of 2024. We had about
18 a 29 percent participation rate, which
19 from a statistical perspective, not
20 what we were shooting for. So we
21 understand that we, again, we have
22 some work to do. Just across
23 organizations, there's opportunities
24 for engagement and survey fatigue,

1 right?

2 And so I do think that that
3 played somewhat of a role. And
4 unfortunately it was launched at the
5 same time as the conversations around
6 return to office. And I think --

7 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

8 Folks weren't trying to fill
9 it out.

10 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yeah.

11 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

12 Okay.

13 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Right. And
14 so I think that had an impact on the
15 participation rate.

16 What we found is that there
17 was a high level of trust among our
18 first line and kind of mid-management
19 level. That there was a lot of
20 positive information relative to
21 questions that were geared around
22 confidence with your manager, your
23 supervisor, around having the
24 equipment that you need to perform

1 your job. Where we had an opportunity
2 for improvement was in communication.

3 And so we have contacted all
4 of our department heads and we have
5 availed to them within the Qualtrics
6 system, which is the system that
7 launched the survey. There is an
8 action planning tool. And so we have
9 been working with our department heads
10 with -- in concert with our Office of
11 Talent and Employee Success to create
12 action plans, walk our department
13 heads through what an action plan
14 would look like for their department
15 and what their expected impact of
16 those action plans and strategies can
17 be.

18 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I
19 heard my time. We'll have another
20 round?

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Well, based upon the feedback
23 for my colleagues, Member O'Rourke,
24 I'm going to move on to the next

1 person and save your next question for
2 the next round, sir.

3 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Yes,
4 sir.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
6 I'm going to call on
7 Councilmember Rue Landau.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
9 you, Council President. Thanks
10 everybody for being here. I
11 appreciate you. I'll run right into
12 this.

13 The Employee Engagement and
14 Infrastructure Unit and the Office of
15 a Talent and Employee Success uses
16 internal communication and initiatives
17 to support employee wellbeing,
18 professional development, and
19 workplace inclusivity.

20 Since President Trump signed
21 his anti DEI executive orders, we've
22 seen major companies and universities
23 concede and dismantle their DEI
24 programs. Is CAO planning on

1 suspending any DEI efforts for the
2 city of Philadelphia?

3 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So
4 unequivocally, no. Right. We've
5 heard the Mayor say this many times.
6 Our mission has not changed. Our
7 responsibilities to not only
8 Philadelphia but to our workforce,
9 remain laser focused. And so we
10 continue to create programs,
11 professional development training. We
12 hired a curriculum developer to ensure
13 that we are availing our workforce
14 with as many tools and resources as
15 needed to create advancement
16 opportunities, take advantage of
17 advancement opportunities, and ensure
18 that we are reaching every member of
19 our workforce and making sure that all
20 opportunities and any potential
21 obstacles to employment pathways are
22 mitigated.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
24 you. I think the next question is for

1 OHR. We heard in their initial budget
2 briefing that there's a 17 percent
3 vacancy rate for hiring. Can you
4 detail which departments have the
5 highest vacancy rates.

6 MS. JONES: I came prepared
7 for that question.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Oh,
9 sure. You came prepared. Thank you.
10 That's good. You just drop it in the
11 five-year plan and here it comes.

12 MS. JONES: So at this
13 current time, our public safety
14 agencies have the highest rate of
15 unfilled positions. And so that is --
16 and these are estimates, but the
17 sheriff's office is around 30 percent.
18 The police department is around 25
19 percent, and the fire department is
20 roughly 20 percent as well.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay.
22 And what --

23 MS. JONES: And so -- we also
24 have a list of -- so aside from the

1 highest departments, we have a list of
2 critical positions as well. And I can
3 detail, and follow-up with that, the
4 listing of those position titles with
5 the specific number of vacancies.

6 We also have action plans for
7 each of those departments, right? So
8 OHR is partnering with prisons very
9 intentionally to increase their
10 recruitment classes. We're partnering
11 with the fire department, with police,
12 and with sheriff as well.

13 And so in addition to
14 identifying that those are our kind of
15 top departments, we do have action
16 plans and then some intentional work
17 being done with those departments.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

19 Wonderful. Thank you.

20 MS. JONES: Sure.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Next
22 question, a little tougher for you.
23 The -- in every program within OHR,
24 the deputy personnel director makes

1 over \$140,000, where most of the rest
2 of the program makes significantly
3 less down to 37,000 for some
4 positions. I believe this goes kind
5 of across the city as well.

6 What is the city doing to
7 create real wage equity and to fix the
8 gaps between wages?

9 MS. JONES: So we are -- a
10 little bit tougher, absolutely. So we
11 are intentional about investments and
12 salaries. And so I think it's
13 important to note, the Office of Human
14 Resources is responsible for looking
15 at pay equity across the city as a
16 whole, across all of our civil service
17 and our exempt job classes.

18 And so in FY24, through the
19 Civil Service Commission and those
20 changes, we invested \$5.3 million in
21 salaries. And some of our hard to
22 fill, hard to recruit classes. And
23 year-to-date for FY25, we've invested
24 \$3.5 million in salaries.

1 But it doesn't end there,
2 right? Like, we are continuously
3 looking at our roles, roles that are
4 difficult to fill, making sure that
5 there are career pathways, to your
6 point. So although a lot of our
7 positions are entry level roles, we
8 certainly don't want -- we want to
9 encourage that career trajectory.

10 So identifying opportunities
11 for growth, and then looking at that
12 entire pathway because certainly we
13 want employees to feel encouraged that
14 they can certainly go from a
15 management trainee level all the way
16 up to the head of a department.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay.
18 That's it for now.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 Thank you very much.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
22 you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
24 Before I call on the next

1 member, we just want to acknowledge
2 that we have students observing us,
3 future leaders observing us from
4 Science Leadership Academy. Welcome
5 to City Hall. Oh, some Carver kids as
6 well. Okay. Students from Carver.
7 Okay. Let's give a round of applause
8 to students from Carver as well.

9 Welcome to City Council,
10 Democracy in action. And what we're
11 doing right now, we're discussing our
12 Fiscal 26 budget. And so welcome to
13 the proceedings.

14 The Chair recognizes
15 Councilmember Dr. Nina Ahmad.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
17 you, Council President.

18 I have a question following
19 up what the Council President asked
20 about the percentages of the MWDSBE
21 contract participation. I wasn't
22 clear what the answer was, why it went
23 down from 36 to 27. So that's one.

24 And the second question is

1 about page 11 in your testimony, about
2 the five largest contracts. These are
3 all our fees were issued and the
4 contract start date were all in 2024
5 and earlier. And I see zero
6 participation for most of them except
7 two, for the MWDSBE categories.

8 So if you could respond to
9 that -- those two, please.

10 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure. So in
11 regard to the overall number and
12 tracking of our minority and disabled
13 business enterprises, I certainly can
14 partner with our director of economic
15 -- I'm sorry, business impact and
16 economic growth, and provide you some
17 more information -- more detailed
18 information on what we believe were
19 the drivers for the -- the decrease in
20 participation overall.

21 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Just as
22 a point, the OEO has still 35 percent
23 as their target, so it seems to be not
24 aligned across the city in terms of

1 what is our target participation rate.

2 So if you -- when you get into that --

3 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

4 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: I would

5 like clarity on why it went down and

6 why is there differences in numbers

7 across different city agencies.

8 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes. And

9 then in regard to CAO's, five

10 contracts, we acknowledge and

11 identified that as a space where we

12 can do better. I think the greatest

13 weight of those contracts are in our

14 search firm area. And we have RFP'd

15 that and want to ensure that that

16 gives us an opportunity to better

17 leverage a broader spectrum of

18 potential contractors.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: I mean,

20 zero is pretty bad.

21 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

22 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And for

23 a searcher -- a search firm --

24 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

1 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: I can
2 guarantee you there are firms out
3 there who are diverse firms to start
4 with in order to be able to do the
5 work. So I don't understand how --

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I could not
7 agree with you more. And so --

8 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So what
9 is the answer? I understand you
10 agree, but why is it this way?

11 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: The answer
12 is the RFP. The answer is the RFP
13 that we recognize that the need to
14 create diversity within the firms that
15 we're working with is essential,
16 right, to achieve the outcomes that
17 we're looking for. And so we have
18 RFP'd for those particular services.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So just
20 to be clear, you're saying the RFP
21 process is why we have zero
22 participation?

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: No, I'm not
24 saying the RFP process is why we have

1 zero participation. The firms -- the
2 contracts that we had were established
3 well before my time here. It was
4 recognized and identified at a space
5 where we can do better and we put an
6 RFP out to make sure that we can
7 leverage all of the different types of
8 firms to include our minority owned
9 business firms to avail that service.

10 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So why
11 is it that on page 11, we don't have
12 any current contracts? Why is it
13 everything 2019? Don't we have what
14 would reflect what you just said? Do
15 we have not any data from 2023, 4, 5?

16 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I can
17 provide that to you. Sure.

18 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.
19 Because that would then address --

20 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure.

21 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Whether
22 we were actually --

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

24 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: -- the

1 data says that we are doing what you
2 said we are doing, because I'm not
3 sure why these data points are so old.
4 Why would we be seeing such old data
5 points and not current data points?

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Okay. My
7 understanding is those are our 2025
8 contract -- FY25 contracts --

9 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So
10 please --

11 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: But I can
12 provide you information on contracts
13 prior to 2025.

14 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So it's
15 just that the contract start dates are
16 all --

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
18 Excuse me, Doctor.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Are all
20 old. Quickly. Sorry.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Excuse me, Dr. Ahmad. Point of
23 information. Councilmember Gilmore-
24 Richardson.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

2 RICHARDSON: Yes. And please,
3 Mr. President, I wanted to keep my
4 time and place in the queue, but I
5 wanted to ask a point of clarification
6 based on Dr. Nina Ahmad's question.
7 And maybe this will help the answer
8 for her, is it that these contracts
9 are four-year contracts each eligible
10 for additional one-year renewals? Is
11 that why it's -- I'm asking.

12 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes, these
13 are contracts that are eligible for
14 the additional renewals.

15 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

16 RICHARDSON: Meaning were they initial
17 three and four-year period contracts,
18 and then they were eligible for one
19 year renewals of up to three
20 additional terms? Is that why, as an
21 example -- because I looked at that
22 page as well, and I saw the contracts
23 from 2019, 2018.

24 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Right.

1 Correct.

2 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

3 RICHARDSON: 2022. So meaning --

4 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: This is our
5 first opportunity to -- yes.

6 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

7 RICHARDSON: Right. To her question,
8 though, is it an initial three or
9 four-year contract that had an
10 opportunity for renewals that the city
11 did undertake, which is why the
12 contract start date is so old?

13 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Let me get
14 back to you on that question.

15 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

16 RICHARDSON: Okay. I just wanted to
17 put that on the record.

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
20 you, Majority Leader.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Dr. Nina Ahmad, reclaim your
23 time.

24 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yes.

1 Thank you so much, Council
2 President. I have a separate question
3 on the CCME, and I wanted to know just
4 where we are on things. Meaning, I
5 know it's very new. So do you have
6 any stats on who you have enrolled,
7 where they're from, which parts of the
8 city they're from? And are we having
9 to do remedial work to get them ready
10 for things? So just a general
11 snapshot of where we are with CCME.

12 MS. DE FRIES: Yeah. Great.
13 Thank you for the question. We
14 launched the program in October with a
15 first initial cohort with two programs
16 in technology and business
17 administration. And that first
18 cohort, we had about 74 people who
19 enrolled.

20 Largely most of the
21 individuals who were enrolled were
22 kind of in a core course that we call
23 our CCME Power Skills, which is
24 something that everyone has to take.

1 And then there were enrollments in the
2 -- in the two career courses.

3 Those individuals have
4 transferred now into the spring. So
5 we have about 76 people currently
6 enrolled in the spring across four
7 separate career pathway programs,
8 which include, additional programs in
9 business administration and
10 technology, but also we added
11 healthcare and the skilled trades in
12 the auto tech area.

13 So we currently have the 76
14 individuals with the expectation that
15 about 20 of those individuals will be
16 completing at the end of this
17 semester.

18 Each program has a different
19 timeline, and individuals are given up
20 to 18 months to complete their
21 program, because some programs are
22 non-credit, some are credit. So they
23 all have different requirements.

24 In terms of the remediation,

1 it depends on the particular program.
2 And part of the model that we've built
3 with Community College of Philadelphia
4 is, if someone encounters a barrier
5 into entry in any of the credit-based
6 programs, they will receive
7 developmental work or bridge
8 programming that can help them then
9 get into the college, into that
10 particular program.

11 The programs that we're
12 looking at are in particular, like the
13 shorter term, either non-credit,
14 training or proficiency certificate
15 because we want to get people into the
16 jobs as quickly as possible. So
17 that's the focus of where we're
18 starting and what we've initiated.

19 In addition, we've also begun
20 to work with several high school
21 populations to get them aligned with
22 jobs that are in city government that
23 allow individuals to come right out of
24 high school into careers. So we're

1 working with the Water Department,
2 we're working with Fleet Management,
3 Department of Public Property, Streets
4 and the Future Track Program in
5 addition to, we're hoping that we can
6 build a model around neighborhood and
7 community engagement.

8 And then the last area is
9 around the upskilling, where we've
10 been working with various different
11 departments on three separate
12 programs.

13 We have five cohorts
14 currently running, and we've completed
15 one cohort in electronic tech that's
16 in partnership with Jevs Orleans
17 Technical College.

18 We have another cohort that
19 we'll be graduating on the 8th. So
20 next week, we're excited about that.
21 We have two cohorts at CCP in the
22 surveyor position with the streets
23 department. And then we're also,
24 currently, we just started a program

1 around maintenance and mechanic with
2 both, the Water Department and the
3 Streets Department, in that particular
4 area.

5 We're in constant
6 communication with the different
7 departments about what their needs are
8 and how we can address them both in
9 terms of thinking about the entry
10 level jobs that are available and have
11 high volume need or hard to fill. And
12 then we're also thinking about those
13 second and third tier positions where
14 we can move city employees up into
15 those. And then that opens up more
16 entry level positions for us to bring
17 people in.

18 So we're kind of trying to
19 create a more cyclical and continuous
20 cycle to get individuals into both the
21 programs that are around upskilling
22 and then also entry level.

23 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And
24 just concluding. So in these seven

1 months since you've started, have you
2 actually placed anyone in the chart?

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

4 Dr. Ahmad, you going to wrap this up.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

6 Wrapping -- last little question.

7 Anybody we have actually placed?

8 MS. DE FRIES: We're still
9 actively trying to place individuals.
10 We only had three people fully
11 complete as of this moment.

12 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Okay.

13 Thank you, Council President
14 for your indulgence.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 Absolutely. Dr. Ahmad, we're
17 going to get to that second round.
18 Majority Leader Gilmore-Richardson.

19 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

20 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
21 Mr. President. I'm going to go really
22 fast because I do need to come back on
23 the second round. I wanted to just
24 say thank you to Camille Duchaussee,

1 CA0, your entire team for all the work
2 that we've done on the non-profit
3 task. Procurement, welcome to the new
4 procurement commissioner, and to all
5 the team members. Real special shout
6 out to Jim Leonard, commissioner of
7 Records and Tracy Williams. They have
8 done stellar work.

9 Giovanni in her office, Candi
10 Jones, Mike Cagney, for helping us
11 with the CTE point preference, Janine
12 LaBletta, who sends us all of the
13 employment opportunities, particularly
14 those for folks who are eligible for
15 the five-point preference. Then I'll
16 go from there.

17 Really quickly -- and I want
18 to also thank LaShawnda Tompkins. I
19 had her down here too, because she was
20 stellar during those meetings. I
21 appreciate all the work that we did on
22 the, the non-profit piece, and I'll
23 come back to that on my second round.

24 CA0 DUCHAUSSEE: Thank you.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

2 RICHARDSON: Last week during budget
3 hearings, I had talked about my
4 concerns around the workforce
5 development department and unit moving
6 from under commerce to CAO. And I
7 wanted to go back to that.

8 I heard you talk about CCME,
9 but I do have real concern around, you
10 know, moving workforce development to
11 CAO because, you know, under the
12 pandemic, the department was slated to
13 be eliminated. We worked really hard
14 in council to keep it. So if you
15 could just talk about how, you know,
16 what that is?

17 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: What the
18 combination is -- the --

19 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

20 RICHARDSON: Meaning --

21 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Or the
22 commitment is to maintaining the
23 Office of Workforce Development.

24 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

1 RICHARDSON: It's even in the budget
2 documents where it shows that the
3 workforce development is coming from
4 commerce and going to CAO. Why?

5 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So again,
6 there's no -- first of all, no doubt
7 or there should be no lack of
8 confidence of the commitment to
9 continuing that work. That work is
10 essential. It is thread through every
11 initiative, whether it's safer,
12 cleaner, greener access to economic
13 opportunity, building, economic
14 mobility. Building our workforce is
15 essential to all of it, right?

16 So there is no version of
17 this that we don't continue the work
18 of the external contacts, and the work
19 of the Office of Work -- Office of
20 Workforce Development. My apologies.

21 Again, I can't stress enough,
22 we experienced this ourselves in
23 standing up CCME in the Office of
24 Workforce Planning, right? There was

1 a lot of segmented work that was going
2 on across the city, and it just -- it
3 wasn't efficient in terms of the --
4 the outcomes were efficient and I
5 think the work itself, but the
6 management of it wasn't efficient in
7 that there were opportunities for
8 partnership that we lost because we
9 had no idea of all the variety of
10 offerings across the city of
11 Philadelphia. Again, there's great
12 work that's being done, but it's being
13 done in departments specifically, so.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
15 RICHARDSON: Okay. I'm sorry, I heard
16 the bell, and I need to get this on
17 the record and I hear that. But this
18 is one of those times where what is
19 happening is going strictly against
20 the code that is in place.

21 Chapter 18-600, Workforce
22 Development Activity and Reporting.
23 If you go to 18-602 under Workforce
24 Development Activity Requirements it

1 states that: "The division shall be
2 led by members of Department of
3 Commerce leadership.

4 "The division shall promote
5 workforce development in the city for
6 the purpose of connecting
7 Philadelphians with jobs and training
8 opportunities, and for the purpose of
9 connecting employers to Philadelphia's
10 workforce.

11 "The division shall serve as
12 a point of contact for employers,
13 including private, public, and quasi-
14 public employers interested in hiring
15 Philadelphians. The division shall
16 collect data and supporting
17 documentation as in -- as is
18 meaningful and available to comply
19 with the workforce development
20 reporting requirements as set forth in
21 18-603.

22 "The division shall work in
23 collaboration with Philadelphia Works,
24 the Philadelphia Industrial

1 Development Corporation, other
2 entities outside of municipal
3 government concerned with workforce
4 development.

5 "The division shall
6 coordinate with the Workforce
7 Professional Alliance and with other
8 institutional partners with workforce
9 development."

10 So -- and that part of the
11 code goes on. So, again, my initial
12 concern was that work is already
13 supposed to be happening, and if it
14 was not happening, we should ensure
15 that it is happening. Because now
16 what you all are asking us to do goes
17 against the code of the City of
18 Philadelphia. And it seems as if,
19 just as this proposal was presented to
20 council, you-all arbitrarily moved
21 workforce development under CAO and
22 are asking the members of council to
23 be in conflict with the laws that are
24 in place.

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So the first
2 thing I'd say is that it wasn't
3 arbitrary, right? The office of CAO
4 is the enterprise-wide administrative
5 arm of the city of Philadelphia.

6 All of the work that goes
7 into workforce development, whether
8 it's external or internal, hits all of
9 the departments that sit in CAO to
10 include OHR, OIT, procurement. All of
11 those are essential to successful
12 programs -- workforce development
13 programs.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
15 RICHARDSON: But I agree with you, I'm
16 not disagreeing with you. What I'm
17 saying -- I'm not disagreeing with you
18 at all. But what I'm saying is, is
19 that in the code --

20 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I hear you.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
22 RICHARDSON: -- in the Philadelphia
23 Code, it states that workforce
24 development is supposed to be under

1 the Department of Commerce leadership.
2 It doesn't say CAO. It says
3 "Department of Commerce leadership."

4 So my concern and my question
5 is, why are we being asked to do
6 something that technically is against
7 the way our code and the current law
8 is set up?

9 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So the
10 leadership of the Commerce Department
11 is a very close partner to us. I
12 understand the concern that you have
13 very specifically in regard to the
14 code, but the leadership of commerce
15 plays a significant role in how our
16 workforce development programming and
17 functions move forward.

18 That doesn't change. They
19 are still an active participant in all
20 of the alliances and the collaboration
21 that goes into the work of OWD.
22 Again, rather than creating spaces
23 where there isn't full view of the
24 work that's being done, the idea of

1 placing OWD within CAO was to improve
2 upon, I think what -- and I know we
3 don't disagree --

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

5 RICHARDSON: And I agree with you.

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I know we
7 don't disagree.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

9 RICHARDSON: And I agree with you.

10 The goals, we agree.

11 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

13 RICHARDSON: We agree. You know how
14 much I care about this work.

15 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

17 RICHARDSON: I did the five-point
18 preference. That's how we're hiring
19 young people when they come from a CT
20 program and work for the city of
21 Philadelphia. We have young people in
22 fleet, young people working in all
23 departments. And I agree with you,
24 you all know that we work very

1 closely, but this has been a major
2 concern of mine for five years since
3 I've been here.

4 This department was slated to
5 be eliminated, and we put the money in
6 council to keep it. But what I'm
7 saying is, is that you-all are asking
8 us to do something that is strictly
9 against the code. That's what I'm
10 saying, because in the definition,
11 even in 18-601, it says that the
12 division of workforce solutions within
13 the Department of Commerce, and I hear
14 what you're saying and I agree with
15 you. We agree on the goals, but you
16 all are asking us to be in conflict
17 with the law.

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So I hear
19 you. And I don't want to take too
20 much of your time, but again, the
21 leadership of commerce still plays a
22 significant role --

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I
24 would say this, ma'am.

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: -- in the
2 workforce development space.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

4 Okay. Because I want to move
5 on to the next person. However, I
6 think probably the city solicitor,
7 whoever does the legislation on behalf
8 of the administration should at least
9 get back with an official response.

10 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Because actually, the law
13 actually says one thing and we are
14 doing something totally different.

15 So just for the record,
16 transparency, accountability,
17 committee 70 type stuff, we just want
18 to make sure we doing things the way
19 we supposed to be doing in proper, as
20 my nana says, in proper decency and
21 order. Is that okay, Madam Leader?

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

23 RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you,
24 Mr. President.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 All right. Official response
3 back from the city solicitor regarding
4 the reorganization of this particular
5 department.

6 Oh, okay. So for the
7 individuals who stepped out the room
8 and are back, so I'm going to call on
9 Councilmember Isaiah Thomas.

10 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I'm
11 speechless. Good morning, everybody.
12 First of all, thank you to everybody
13 from the admin that's here. Thank you
14 to all my colleagues, because you've
15 asked some phenomenal questions. I'm
16 like crossing them off one at a time.

17 Let me just start with local
18 procurement stuff. We passed a bill a
19 few years ago coming out of the
20 pandemic that basically said that the
21 city of Philadelphia had to have a
22 certain percentage of all city
23 contracts go to Philadelphia based
24 businesses.

1 Based on looking at the
2 admins, first year, last year, where
3 did we finish, how did we do last year
4 as it relates to following the law
5 specifically around to keep it local
6 legislation?

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure. So
8 I'm going to turn to our new
9 procurement commissioner, Ronald
10 Hovey, and also ask that LaShawnda
11 Tompkins, Deputy Procurement
12 Commissioner come to the table.

13 MR HOVEY: So I'll start and
14 I'll let LaShawnda pile on if she has
15 anything to add, or correct me if I
16 get anything wrong.

17 So in '24, our goal was 47
18 percent and we actually achieved 54
19 percent. Our goal going forward in 25
20 is 56. And I asked for -- we don't
21 quite -- we didn't have the numbers
22 yet for a to-date percentage, but
23 we'll get that to you. But it looked
24 like we were doing well.

1 And this is a rolling three-
2 year average, by the way. So it has a
3 little smoothing associated with it
4 from a data standpoint.

5 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: That's
6 amazing. Has anybody done any type of
7 economic study to assess the impact
8 that this has had prior to the
9 legislation? Less than 30 percent of
10 all city contracts went to
11 Philadelphia based businesses, and now
12 we're up over 50 percent. So from an
13 economic perspective, how much does
14 that help benefit the city? Because
15 those businesses that we're invested
16 in and pouring in those businesses get
17 to grow to get to hire more people.
18 They end up paying more taxes and it
19 ends up being revenue back to us.

20 So have we looked at the
21 improvements from our local economy
22 based on -- since the legislation has
23 been passed in the law?

24 MR. HOVEY: So I haven't

1 spoken to Rob Dubow on the fiscal side
2 of the business.

3 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Can
4 that be a homework assignment? Can we
5 -- before we pass or vote on a budget
6 this year, look at -- keep a local
7 legislation and try to assess how much
8 from a fiscal lens has it benefited
9 the city?

10 MR HOVEY: Absolutely. He
11 has the relationship with the
12 economists.

13 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:
14 Amazing. Thank you. I have a lot of
15 other questions. I'm going to submit
16 them in writing, but one question is
17 burning me up and I just -- I need to
18 know.

19 For OIT, we're looking at 10
20 million. And somebody asked us
21 already. I did step out as the
22 Council President says. I apologize
23 if I missed it.

24 There's been \$10 million

1 increase in the class 200 for OIT,
2 which is about 12 percent increase.
3 And, you know, why? What are the new
4 initiatives or new projects, or why
5 are we asking for \$10 million more in
6 class 200, which is a 12 percent
7 increase. But I haven't heard about
8 any new projects, any new ventures.
9 Just help us understand that line
10 item.

11 MS. SCOTT: Hello. Melissa
12 Scott, Chief Information Officer. So
13 we have actually many projects. And
14 so that bucket could go to multiple
15 places. We have the OPAL Project,
16 which you're aware of.

17 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: I'm
18 sorry. You have the what project?

19 MS. SCOTT: OPAL Project.
20 Are you aware of OPAL? Oh, okay. Let
21 me get that out for you. Hold on.

22 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: That's
23 a new project?

24 MS. SCOTT: No, no, it's a

1 project that's currently, we've been
2 working on for several years.

3 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So --
4 because my time is up and I definitely
5 want to move on, and if you don't have
6 the answer, you could put it in
7 writing, but I'm just -- I'm saying
8 that if we're occurring 10 million --
9 if you're requesting 10 million new
10 dollars, one would think that
11 something new is coming.

12 MS. SCOTT: Yeah.

13 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So I'm
14 just wondering --

15 MS. SCOTT: So we do have
16 something new. Let me share that with
17 you. I think you'll be really
18 interested in that. So as you can see
19 right now on the home page, if you go
20 to phila.gov, you currently see a new
21 home home page. We are in the process
22 of re-platforming phila.gov.

23 So now all of the pages will
24 be new and modernized, which also

1 would allow us for the capabilities of
2 single sign-on for residents, I know
3 that's something that everyone is
4 interested in, as well as bringing
5 in-house mobile -- in-house mobile
6 development. So what that does is,
7 you know, we have a lot of contracts
8 and where the bleeding begins is, or
9 which never ends, is the maintenance
10 part where we have vendors that come
11 in and you see the dollar amount on
12 RFP, but what we forget to consider is
13 the years of maintenance that -- and
14 millions of dollars that the city
15 spent.

16 So by bringing in a mobile
17 house development team, we'll be able
18 to create mobile apps for different
19 departments which will allow
20 constituents to receive information
21 quickly and ready -- more readily
22 available. So that's one of a few.

23 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

24 Council President, I'm not

1 going to go back and forth. I'm just
2 going to ask that you submit this
3 information in writing. But when
4 you're talking about some of the
5 changes in technology, that sounds
6 amazing.

7 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

9 Listening to the idea of apps
10 and new websites and things of that
11 capacity. I know me and I know my
12 staff, if I vote for this, that we
13 don't have no new apps, no new
14 technology.

15 MS. SCOTT: Well --

16 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: And
17 everything is just as archaic as it is
18 right now. That would be extremely
19 frustrating. So as I close out, I
20 hear to do programs, I'm sure that
21 there are way more -- I really don't
22 want to monopolize folks time.

23 I'm not going to come back
24 for the second round, but I'm hanging.

1 I'm not going nowhere. But I do want
2 to -- yeah, I will submit my answers
3 -- questions in writing. If you could
4 give us a list of all of those things.
5 And then including that, you know,
6 you're talking about growing 24
7 positions when the office isn't filled
8 already.

9 So just help us, in writing,
10 just help us understand, you know, how
11 are you asking for more money for more
12 staff when you can't fill the
13 positions that you have. All right.
14 Thank you, Council President.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 No, could you go on the
17 record and explain that now, just for
18 the record, please.

19 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Asked
20 it.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

22 It's a legitimate question and it's in
23 my notes, but I've digressed from my
24 members, but it is in my notes as

1 well. So I think we want to be
2 fiscally responsible and make sure
3 that we doing good by the PAC,
4 taxpayers dollars. I think inquiring
5 minds want to know.

6 MS. SCOTT: So I have the
7 unique advantage of working within OIT
8 as well as leading a department. So I
9 understand more than anyone that the
10 culture of OIT needs to change. And
11 I've been making an extra effort to
12 make sure that we invest in our
13 employees and skill up, which also
14 helps retention as well as a
15 collaborative department where
16 employees can work together also with
17 other departments.

18 So I want to take a look at
19 the numbers for a second. And as far
20 as where we are, our vacancy rate is
21 actually 80 that are funded by OIT.
22 But I took a further look at where we
23 are within the year, and we had 77
24 separations within this year.

1 So I think we -- what we need
2 to concentrate more so than anything
3 is really on retention. How do we
4 make -- keep our employees? Because I
5 feel like I'm chasing my tail, if you
6 will.

7 I've been working very hard
8 in order to create -- new positions
9 are important because technology is
10 constantly evolving. So we did have
11 93 new positions and we were able to
12 fulfill 66 of them. However, we had
13 77 separations, 21 people retired, but
14 zero of those positions were posted
15 for more than a year. So that just
16 gives you a little perspective of
17 where we are in the industry and how
18 we need to make a better effort in
19 making sure that we retain our talent
20 when we find them in this competitive
21 market.

22 Because we do have in our
23 staff the brightest and the best. So
24 they're constantly being recruited.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 Okay. I always keep it to
3 being thank you for the Land Bank
4 streamlining process in terms of the
5 new program we have. So I deal with
6 developers on a daily basis, and so
7 I'm going to get credit with credit is
8 due. So thank you and your team for
9 revamping the Land Bank website.

10 MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 The Chair recognizes
13 Councilmember Jim Harrity, then Jamie
14 Gauthier, then Councilmember Jeffrey
15 J. Young, and then we'll officially go
16 into our second round.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Thank
18 you, Council President. Thank you
19 everyone for being here today. Just a
20 couple following up questions on some
21 of the stuff that we just had. So as
22 it goes for retention, because that
23 apparently is even a more dire need
24 than actually the hiring which I

1 thought was a direr need.

2 How do we make it more
3 attractive for our employees to stay?
4 I know when I first got here, I put 10
5 million alone into the budget for
6 bonuses for first responders and hard-
7 to-find positions such as building
8 inspectors where it takes a lot of
9 time to train them with a very
10 expensive cost. And then they end up
11 working for us for a few months and go
12 get paid double out in the county.

13 How do we -- how do we face
14 that challenge? How do we keep people
15 here? Is it by extending benefits?
16 For instance, you know, 30 years
17 lifetime medical? I don't know. I'm
18 fishing for answers, if you get what
19 I'm saying.

20 We need to fix. If we can't
21 even keep up with the employees we're
22 losing on a daily basis for whatever
23 reason, retirement, leaving to go to
24 another job, how are we supposed to

1 fill these 5,700 positions? It makes
2 a lot more sense now when you look at
3 the number of people who filled out
4 applications, which was something
5 around 10,000 or so. No, it was -- I
6 forget what the number was. But it
7 was -- it was a lot more than the
8 actual number we needed. It was
9 extremely higher. But I just -- how
10 do we keep up with this? Because this
11 is going to be a problem.

12 MS. JONES: So I can start
13 with just a few, like, data points, I
14 think would be helpful to set -- level
15 set the tone. And I know that the CIO
16 probably has a few comments for this.
17 So just generally, the average years
18 of service for city employees is 13
19 years of service. So we're doing okay
20 as far as retention. And we are
21 seeing that when we're looking at the
22 change from FY23 to FY25, voluntary
23 turnover is declining.

24 I did send over some of the

1 separations data in advance. And so
2 we're seeing that voluntary turnover
3 is going down, which is a positive
4 thing for us. But I think it's a --
5 there's a couple of different things.
6 I think benefits certainly, right? So
7 the expansion of parental leave is
8 certainly something that is going to
9 return.

10 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Yeah,
11 there you go.

12 MS. JONES: Absolutely.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: That
14 would seem to me to be something
15 that's kind of an easy fix.

16 MS. JONES: No, absolutely.
17 It's an easy fix, but it is huge. It
18 has huge impact, right? And so, the
19 deputy at the Office of Human
20 Resources, Marsha Greene-Jones is
21 constantly looking at the landscape of
22 city benefits to figure out if there
23 are opportunities for us to expand
24 particular benefits like parental

1 leave and other things in order to
2 gain retention.

3 We're also looking at -- we
4 have programs like Credential Based
5 Bonuses, Tuition Reimbursement, and so
6 there's a variety of programs. I don't
7 think it's a one size fit all, right?
8 For retention, I think we need to sort
9 of attack that issue from various
10 angles.

11 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Yeah,
12 I've gotten -- I ask about it. You
13 know what I mean? So I talk to the
14 police officers when I see them and I
15 talk to others. And to be honest,
16 there's no, especially for police
17 officers, once they get their 25, it's
18 not really beneficial for them to stay
19 here, which is kind of harsh.

20 I mean, their pensions are
21 capped at, I think 65 percent for the
22 police, just -- and that's just the
23 one I know off the top of my head. So
24 why would somebody stay once they hit

1 their time and they can't get anymore?

2 Again, you know, maybe

3 looking at that and also looking at

4 our benefits and the longevity of our

5 benefits, it is something that maybe

6 we need to start looking to try to

7 make it more attractive to stay here

8 in the city.

9 The fact of the matter is,

10 the city is fairly a good job. You

11 know, people -- you can -- you can

12 survive, you can raise a family a lot

13 of times on the city wage. But, you

14 know, people do these jobs for a long

15 period of time and they get good at

16 it. And then other people want them.

17 And so they leave and they go get more

18 money. We just need to figure out how

19 do we attract employees?

20 Like I said, when I was a

21 kid, I remember a city job was it.

22 You know, you got a city job, you were

23 set for life. You know what I mean?

24 I always give the example of my father

1 was a port authority cop, and my uncle
2 was a sanitation worker, and their
3 house always had more than our house
4 had because he got all this overtime,
5 you know, which I don't believe
6 somebody should have to work overtime
7 in order to make a pay that should be
8 optional if he wants something extra.

9 But for me, it's about how do
10 we retain the employees that we have
11 in order so that we can actually catch
12 up on the employees we need.

13 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: And I think
14 we have been - this is a question that
15 has been at the forefront of all of
16 the work that's been done across the
17 administration. I know that you-all
18 are very much aware that the home
19 initiative also includes incentivizing
20 or creating affordable housing for
21 very specifically members of our
22 workforce.

23 There are a lot of different
24 kind of innovative things that we're

1 trying to work through to get to a
2 place where --

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I get
4 -- I'm sorry to cut you off, but I get
5 that. But since you mentioned it,
6 that program's really not doing like
7 we thought it was going to do either.

8 From what I understand,
9 talking to employees again, is that
10 they actually can't afford the houses.
11 These are supposed to be work for
12 houses for our employees.

13 Again, we mandate that our
14 employees should live in the city, but
15 we don't pay them enough to live in
16 the city. And then we're trying to
17 start a program to help them to live
18 in this city, and they can't afford
19 the program that we started.

20 You know, for me it's
21 different. I was in the
22 administration. So I was in the
23 Street Administration. I've seen a
24 lot of things go on before I left

1 there. I seen him do a lot of things.

2 I learned that government
3 does not need to make a profit. We
4 get subsidized on these housing
5 things.

6 Remember when John Street was
7 building houses, Council President? A
8 few people were here. Some of those
9 houses cost us upwards of \$260,000 to
10 build. You know what we sold them
11 for? 65,000. People could think
12 because we don't have to make a
13 profit. Subsidized. Most of it
14 wasn't actual city money. It was
15 federal and state money.

16 My thing is, we -- why you
17 brought it up and we need to get that
18 program --

19 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

20 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: -- on
21 steroids as the Mayor says because I
22 believe that it can be a good thing.
23 We just have to make it affordable for
24 our employees.

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Oh,
2 absolutely.

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: We
4 know what we're paying them, so why
5 can't we make it so that they can
6 afford it on their pay?

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Right. And
8 I believe we are aligned there, right?
9 And so the experience that I've had
10 working in the Federal Bureau of
11 Prisons for 20 some odd years was just
12 that.

13 You'll find that retaining
14 employees in the prison system in
15 particular is a prickly and difficult
16 challenge to crack -- not to crack,
17 right? What we found was housing was
18 an incentive, right? Where we had --
19 where we built correctional
20 institutions and provided staff
21 housing, that was a very significant
22 incentive where we provided other
23 supports, where we got out into the
24 community and understood what were the

1 things that were specifically
2 important to the folks who were moving
3 to those areas was the work that
4 improved our retention and recruitment
5 in the Federal Bureau of Prisons.
6 That's exactly the work that's being
7 done here.

8 I will tell you a lot of the
9 work around return to learning, the
10 work around CCME upskilling, creating
11 different pathways so that, yes, you
12 get into the city's government and you
13 decide I want to pivot to a different
14 path, making that available, making it
15 less difficult, creating more
16 conversation around exactly what you
17 just said. The importance and the
18 pride in working in the public sector,
19 right?

20 There -- we have created
21 within CCME an entire class program
22 that's built around understanding the
23 importance and the value of civic
24 engagement and public service. And so

1 all of those things are pieces to the
2 issue that you've raised. How do we
3 attack retention? I think all of
4 these things and all of the work
5 that's being done is geared towards
6 that.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

8 Thank you very much. I will
9 hope that -- and we want to be
10 partners in this, because we are on
11 the front line right now, right?
12 Local government is really the last
13 option of resort for a lot of people.

14 And as we see people being
15 laid off on a federal level, and I
16 have people in my neighborhood who
17 have been laid off and they're looking
18 to us. And this is just a prime
19 opportunity to really go hard and
20 recruit as many people as possible to
21 fill these positions as a result of
22 the policies that are coming down from
23 Washington, D.C. having an impact on
24 our community, too.

1 So we would like to be
2 partners in that and really address it
3 with a sense of urgency, right?
4 Because even as we build and preserve
5 30,000 units, if people don't have
6 good paying jobs, right, then we'll
7 just have 30,000 --

8 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
9 Vacant units.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
11 -- preserved vacant units that people
12 won't have the opportunity to move in.
13 And so we want to be partners from
14 that aspect. And anything that we can
15 do to address this with a sense of
16 urgency, I'm sure members of council
17 --

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 -- will join you in your efforts. The
21 Chair recognizes Councilmember Jeffrey
22 J. Young. Oh, it was you?

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank
24 you, Mr. President.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 It was you? I'm sorry.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I'll

4 defer. Thanks.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

6 It was Jamie Gauthier. See

7 what happens when you-all leave? It

8 was Jamie Gauthier, then Councilmember

9 Jeffrey J. Young, and then we'll

10 officially go into -- one second.

11 Councilman Lozada, do you

12 want to wrap up this first round

13 before we go into the second round?

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I got

15 no trouble, sir.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Okay. All right. Just

18 before we go into the second round, if

19 you would like to ask a question,

20 ma'am. Councilman Jamie Gauthier.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

22 Thank you, Councilman

23 President. I have questions for the

24 tax review board. Good morning.

1 The biggest issues my
2 constituents have with property
3 appeals are unclear timelines and
4 communication. When folks submit
5 their appeals, they typically do not
6 receive confirmation that it was
7 received unless it's submitted through
8 our office. They also do not know who
9 their reviewer is until they receive
10 the decision.

11 What steps can the review
12 board take to improve communication
13 and give people updates at every step
14 of the appeal process? And what can
15 the review board do to improve
16 transparency for how long the process
17 will take? The five-year plan reads
18 that it takes five to six months, but
19 most cases really take up to a year.

20 MS. ANDRE: Good morning. My
21 name is Melissa Andre. I am the
22 Executive Director of the Philadelphia
23 Tax Review Board. And unfortunately,
24 I believe you're -- some of these

1 questions are for the board of
2 revision of taxes which deals with the
3 assessment of the appeals. The tax
4 review board takes care of -- or can
5 help petitioners deal with the
6 interest in the penalties that have
7 accrued.

8 So two different boards, but
9 I think the questions that you asked
10 were more for the board of revision of
11 taxes. However, the tax review board
12 has a very -- we hold very fast to a
13 three to six months for the initial
14 appeal. So if you come into our
15 office and you file a hearing, it
16 takes approximately three to six
17 months.

18 We do have a backlog in one
19 category, which is license and
20 inspections for the bills for those
21 taxes. But that is being controlled.
22 So generally we are at a three to
23 six-month window for a petition and
24 for a hearing.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

2 Thank you. I apologize.

3 I'll just -- I'll move on to a
4 different set of questions so I don't
5 use all my time. But thank you for
6 coming up here.

7 MS. ANDRE: No problem.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I
9 have a question for OIT. I know that
10 in 2020 the city released a digital
11 equity plan with the goal of getting
12 everybody online. Is that -- we are
13 in a new administration. But I wanted
14 to ask, is that still a goal of this
15 administration? And if so, where are
16 we with that?

17 MS. SCOTT: Thank you. So,
18 yes, this is a goal continuously
19 through the Verizon Franchise
20 Agreement. We are placing free Wi-Fi
21 broadband services in all 183
22 locations. Right now we have 50 of
23 those locations lit up. But what is
24 really exciting is that we just

1 launched the new Wi-Fi finder.

2 So right now you can go
3 online and identify what locations
4 where you can find free Wi-Fi here
5 within the city, which includes the
6 recreation centers as well as the
7 libraries. And as each location gets
8 lit up, it gets added in the -- in the
9 finder so constituents can use that
10 today.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: And
12 are we tracking how many people are
13 connected through these efforts and
14 which areas of the city still need the
15 most work?

16 MS. SCOTT: Yes, I'm glad you
17 answered -- asked that question. What
18 we want to do is find a way to have
19 more lasting transformative
20 relationships with constituents. So
21 we have hired our -- we are bringing
22 in-house our digital navigators where
23 they'll start to work with individuals
24 in -- as far as distributing devices,

1 but providing them digital skills
2 training, then identifying, are we
3 being impactful in their lives, right?

4 So I want us to really
5 develop a relationship with the
6 constituents and make sure that they
7 get the digital training as well. So,
8 because when you think of the three
9 tiers, Wi-Fi is just one layer. Then
10 you need the device, right, to get on.
11 Then you need the skills that you need
12 in order to actually take full
13 advantage.

14 And then we could even take
15 it even further where you think of how
16 is it that an individual could qualify
17 for some jobs here in OIT, right? By
18 us starting and building on those
19 blocks, we would then be able to start
20 training individuals to qualify for
21 the positions.

22 But with the vision that I
23 have is really, imagine that every
24 single rec center in the city of

1 Philadelphia, and instead of a young
2 girl or a young boy getting a football
3 in their hand, you give them a
4 computer. A computer is a job just as
5 well, right? Esports. And there's so
6 many other things that we could be
7 teaching our youth.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

9 Thank you so much. It would
10 be great if at some point when you all
11 are ready, if you could just send us a
12 progress report on where we are with
13 that. I think this is a very
14 important goal for the district, my
15 district and for the city as a whole.

16 MS. SCOTT: Sure.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

18 Thank you, Council President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

20 Just a point of information regarding
21 Esports to the gentleman,
22 Councilmember Thomas.

23 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Thank
24 you, Council President. You read my

1 mind. I -- we have been pushing for
2 Esports in a lot of different spaces
3 and places, especially in our rec
4 centers and our libraries. Wasn't
5 going to ask this, but you brought it
6 up. I mean, are we talking about the
7 initiative you have where you're
8 talking about distributing 50
9 computers in each council district?

10 MS. SCOTT: No, that's just
11 the beginning, Councilman.

12 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Okay.

13 MS. SCOTT: So -- and let me
14 talk to you a little bit about why
15 that came about. We were contracted
16 with a company called PCs for People.
17 And PCs for People, they do the
18 refurbishing of the computers, but
19 then they charge the constituents for
20 the computers anywhere from 50 to 175.
21 I didn't think it was fair. I feel
22 like we should be giving the computers
23 away for free.

24 So now what we -- we've

1 changed the program around a little
2 bit and what we're doing is going in
3 each council district distributing the
4 computers. But we also have an extra
5 effort in order to repurpose the
6 computer labs within the rec centers.

7 Then we are creating a
8 program for digital skills training
9 right there in the rec centers. And
10 Esports is one of them. As a matter
11 of fact, I have an appointment with a
12 school somewhere in Delaware, and they
13 have a very elaborate Esports center
14 and we're going to take a trip there
15 to see how they built theirs out and
16 get some more information for ours.

17 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So
18 just to continue, how much like that
19 initiative -- that's going to cost us
20 about \$1.6 million? Is that accurate?

21 MS. SCOTT: No, I don't have
22 a funding source for that exactly. So
23 what I've been doing is taking the
24 funding that we currently have in

1 digital equity and figuring out a way.
2 But there's also -- we get grants all
3 the time. There's always different
4 ways to do it. But the digital skills
5 training specifically will be -- we'll
6 start off with -- we are hiring six
7 new individuals who will do the
8 digital skills training just to start
9 out for FY26 in the rec centers. And
10 then we will start a volunteering
11 program as well for individuals like
12 myself who would like to go in and do
13 some training as well.

14 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So,
15 Council President, I'm just going to
16 ask that we have a coordinated effort
17 with our office throughout the course
18 of this initiative, specifically
19 around gaming. It seems like we're
20 meshing digital access with gaming,
21 which are two totally different
22 things. And if we were really talking
23 about promoting and pushing gaming,
24 and if you talk to the people in the

1 gaming industry, they'll tell you
2 they'll rather be in the libraries
3 than the rec center.

4 So if we can have more of a
5 coordinated effort moving forward so
6 we can figure out, because some of the
7 places that you're talking about going
8 to in Delaware, we have a whole task
9 force that produced a report that has
10 all of these recommendations for the
11 city of Philadelphia specifically
12 around gaming. And maybe we could
13 share that and bring some of these
14 people together so we can be able to
15 move in a way that's a little
16 coordinated.

17 MS. SCOTT: I would love
18 that. Thank you so much.

19 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Thank
20 you. Thank you, Council President.
21 Sorry about that.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
23 And I just want to say in
24 terms of just bridging the digital

1 divide and as we address the issue of
2 AI, because that's also a space that I
3 expect that we'll be in, in the future
4 as well, when our chair of technology
5 has been working on this issue.

6 And also as a Dad, I just
7 want to say, right, and I blame Member
8 Thomas in the event that it goes down
9 this way with my little ones, right?
10 As a dad, I just want to say that we
11 are mindful when we are introducing
12 them to technology, just making sure
13 also we're protecting them.

14 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 You don't know who's on the
17 other side of their group chat when
18 they're inside the rec centers and
19 they go on like Roblox or they go on
20 Fortnite. And once they go into a
21 chat room, we don't know who's over
22 there talking to our young people. So
23 making sure that education component
24 is a part of it.

1 And then also the mental
2 health component that comes along with
3 screen time. I recognize that and
4 working with other parents, and I've
5 been to other workshops that really
6 talk about, I guess I call it screen
7 addiction for children.

8 MS. SCOTT: Yes.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
10 Right? And once you take
11 their screen away from them, have an
12 impact on their behavior because they
13 want to still be involved in playing
14 again, rather it's Roblox, Fortnite,
15 and there's a thousand other games
16 that are out there.

17 And then also just making
18 sure that they aren't spending their
19 parents' dollars and cents on their
20 credit cards on -- so those are just
21 some of the things that as we expand
22 and go into this space, I say it
23 jokingly, but in my -- in my other
24 life as a dad, I've been to workshops

1 really around protecting my sons from,
2 and the other students at the school
3 they attend from when they go on these
4 websites, particularly making sure
5 when they go in them chat rooms, who
6 are you talking to on the other side
7 of room?

8 And if you have rec centers
9 where the ratio might be 40 kids to
10 like two recs -- two recs leaders,
11 they aren't monitoring everybody who's
12 on the computers. They're kind of,
13 like, free at place. So I think the
14 education component goes a long way to
15 it, but we are here to be partners
16 with that under the leadership of
17 Councilman Rue Landau and
18 Councilmember Thomas. The Chair
19 recognizes Councilman Jeffrey J.
20 Young?

21 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
22 you, Mr. President. You know, I just
23 have, you know, just -- you know, in
24 support of, you know, the e-gaming

1 industry and the -- and the billions
2 of dollars that can come from that,
3 you know. And hearing from the
4 experts who say they want to be in
5 libraries which is why I am very
6 supportive of increasing the capacity,
7 increasing the square footage of our
8 libraries in order to have these types
9 of programs.

10 Because again, our libraries
11 are not equipped for 21st century
12 ideas. And so I just want to put that
13 out there on the record.

14 And first question I have is
15 for -- I guess it would be for HR.
16 One thing that I do notice and that I
17 see is that whenever I'm at a job fair
18 and the city is there, the city's line
19 is the longest line by far compared to
20 any other prospective employer that's
21 there.

22 So it looks like to me that
23 there is a lot of interest in still
24 working for the city. And with -- but

1 this interest doesn't seem to turn
2 over into the actual job.

3 So can you talk to us about
4 what you are seeing? Like, is it only
5 a specific type of job that people are
6 applying to that have all this
7 interest versus the level of vacancies
8 that we see?

9 MS. JONES: Sure. So there
10 is definitely a lot of interest. When
11 we're at -- so 60 percent of our
12 recruitment events are community
13 events where you're seeing us boots on
14 the ground with or without the hiring
15 bus. And so we're engaging over 4,000
16 prospective applicants, 71 percent of
17 whom are residents. And so that spans
18 across various career pathways.

19 And so there are very
20 particular jobs. So jobs that are
21 open on an open competitive basis are
22 the jobs that we are in when we're
23 doing community recruitment that we're
24 getting our residents into. So that

1 includes custodial worker, a laborer,
2 management trainee, some of our entry-
3 level engineering positions.

4 And so we do have a breakdown
5 of what those applicants look like
6 across all of those industries that I
7 can follow-up and provide. But it is
8 not in any particular job industry.
9 When we are sourcing for candidates,
10 it is really across all of these
11 critical positions that we're looking
12 for to recruit open competitively in.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
14 you. And so when the city -- years
15 ago, the city had a need the clean
16 vacant lots, so they created the CLIP
17 program, right? The Community Life
18 Improvement Program, which is based
19 out of the managing director's office.
20 And from my understanding, these
21 members -- these workers are not civil
22 service employees. But -- and I
23 believe they weren't civil service
24 employees and They were not civil

1 service employees because that need
2 was so critical, and the speed of
3 getting those folks hired was
4 critical.

5 We're looking at a lack of --
6 a lot of my rec centers don't have
7 staff, right? There's no staff there
8 for events, for programming. And the
9 community members, you know, you have
10 to have at least two staffers there at
11 a rec center. And community members
12 cannot have events there with the lack
13 of staffing.

14 And so, because I feel like
15 this is a dire issue, a dire need, is
16 it possible to create a similar
17 program to CLIP for our rec centers
18 where we have, you know, these
19 staffers that are under the Managing
20 Director's office, but work directly
21 in these rec centers to fill this
22 critical community need?

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 Just a point of information.

1 Member Young, we do have a program and
2 -- we do have a program that will
3 allow you a pathway to -- you won't be
4 official RS1 rec leader, but you will
5 be able to work under Parks & Rec.

6 And remember this program
7 under the cap of level I, because the
8 barrier in our neighbors that you have
9 people who volunteer day in and day
10 out. They know the kids in the
11 neighborhood, they work at the rec
12 centers, and then they get the
13 seasonal jobs, right?

14 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: The
15 seasonal, right.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 But the issue is they don't
18 have degrees. And because they don't
19 have a degree, I guess, to be the RS1,
20 right? And they also have to take the
21 test. But there is a program, could
22 you elaborate on, that will allow you
23 a pathway into the system without
24 going through civil service?

1 MS. JONES: Yes, absolutely.

2 So I'm going to ask Janine LaBletta,
3 deputy for hiring services to come up
4 to talk about that particular pathway
5 and the work that we're doing with
6 Parks & Recreation in particular.

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: And while
8 Janine is making her way up here, I
9 would also like to say that it is --
10 it's this collaboration and the work
11 that makes CCME so vital, right? It's
12 closing that gap between the number of
13 applicants that we have and the skills
14 that they have to fill the jobs that
15 are available. Sorry.

16 MS. LABLETTA: Hi, good
17 morning. Janine LaBletta, deputy for
18 hiring services. Thank you for having
19 us. So we do have two titles in civil
20 service that don't require degrees:
21 Assistant recreation leader and
22 recreation outreach worker. So we do
23 post those and recruit in the
24 community to fill those. And then to

1 the Council President's point, that
2 would be the role called recreation
3 specialty instructor, which is filled
4 directly through the Parks &
5 Recreation Department.

6 And we do direct candidates
7 in the field or if they call our
8 customer service, how to reach the
9 Parks Department website, and they can
10 apply directly for those roles.

11 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And
12 with those roles, and there seems --
13 there seems to be a disconnect from
14 community members, right, who are at
15 rec centers all the time, right? In
16 programming, they're in friends of
17 groups and actually getting hired by
18 the rec department.

19 And so I'm just trying to --
20 how can we bridge that gap? I'm
21 thinking of three rec centers off the
22 top where there are folks who are
23 there all the time who would love to
24 be getting paid for what they're

1 doing, but they're there for the love
2 of the community.

3 So how can we bridge that gap
4 if we have these programs, right, and
5 they're -- and they're not civil
6 service, right? Because folks --
7 everyone can't pass the civil service
8 test for whatever reason. It just is
9 what it is. But how do we bridge that
10 gap between the community members who
11 want to serve and getting hired by the
12 department of rec in some capacity at
13 that rec center to expand our capacity
14 there?

15 MS. LABLETTA: Yes. So Parks
16 & Recreation is having a job fair
17 coming up. Hopefully all of the
18 councilmembers have that at The Dell.

19 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: At --
20 yeah, we have that. That's fine. But
21 again, these are -- I'm talking about
22 how can we create a position --
23 positions, right? We have -- these
24 fairs are there. A lot of those

1 folks, you know, don't have degrees,
2 so they're not going to be able to
3 qualify for rec leaders as they
4 created the assistant rec leader
5 program.

6 Like, how do we, again,
7 bridge that gap? We got the seasonal
8 program, that's seasonal, right? How
9 can we, again, bridge that gap between
10 -- we have folks who are there
11 everyday at the rec center who are
12 just there on a voluntary basis. What
13 can we do to get them hired by the
14 city in some type of role at the rec
15 center. If they can pass, you know,
16 all the child clearances, things like
17 that, how can we get them to be in --
18 to be employees to actually carry out
19 their duties that they're already
20 volunteering to do?

21 MS. LABLETTA: If they have
22 high school and I think it's three
23 seasons, but I can have us send you
24 that, they can qualify for permanent

1 civil service roles.

2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Again,
3 civil service. We're saying -- I'm
4 not saying civil service, right?
5 Because again, folks are not able to
6 get over civil service for whatever
7 reason. When I mentioned the example
8 of CLIP in the Managing Director's
9 Office, that's not civil service, but
10 those folks work for the city full
11 time, right? And they're out here
12 doing these jobs.

13 So that's the type of model
14 that I'm looking for our department of
15 recreation. A full-time position, not
16 necessarily just something that's
17 seasonal.

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So I
19 appreciate the question and we are
20 very happy to partner with you on that
21 because we've already had some
22 preliminary conversation about just
23 what your -- the model -- expanding
24 the model that you're mentioning,

1 creating where we can civil service
2 roles, but also exempt roles to bridge
3 the gap.

4 I know CCME, I've said it a
5 lot. It's not the panacea for all
6 things, but it will allow us to create
7 spaces to provide upskilling,
8 training, qualifying experiential
9 opportunities, to do exactly what
10 you're suggesting here, which is
11 bridge the gap between those who have
12 either a penchant or have demonstrated
13 the ability to do some work or the
14 aptitude to do the work and get us
15 from point A to point B.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 The Chair recognizes the Vice
18 Chair of Parks & Recreation,
19 Councilmember Bass.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I -- you
21 know, I -- what comes to mind from
22 Jeffrey -- Councilman Young's
23 questioning is Philly Future Track,
24 which is a way that was used --

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Uh-huh.

2 Exactly.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: -- you
4 know, to find a faster path to
5 employment in the streets department
6 and in similar departments. So
7 something like that, if we did it for
8 that particular agency, I think we can
9 recreate it and maybe just -- or even
10 expand future track so that it's not
11 just the streets department, but that
12 it could be for Parks & Rec and some
13 other departments.

14 MS. JONES: So where -- oh,
15 sorry. So where there's a bridge, I
16 hear you. Where there's a bridge and
17 possibly an exempt opportunity that
18 then leads to civil service in the
19 future. Agreed. We should have that
20 conversation.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yeah.
22 Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
24 Thank you very much. We are

1 in the second round. The Chair
2 recognizes Councilmember Brooks.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank
4 you, Council President. I'm going to
5 go right to my questions. One is, how
6 many OIT staff are dedicated to
7 maintaining the PVSSP camera network?
8 And what percentage of OIT's annual
9 personal -- personnel budget is
10 consumed by the PVSSP maintenance?

11 And my other question is,
12 what is the estimated annual savings
13 for a family enrolled in PHLConnected
14 and how does this free up income for
15 other essentials like food or rent?
16 Right.

17 MS. SCOTT: Could you repeat
18 the question? The first question,
19 Councilwoman, was how many staff
20 members are designated?

21 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yes.
22 For the PVSSP camera network.

23 MS. SCOTT: Okay. I'll have
24 to get back to you on the exact number

1 of -- and we will get a response back
2 to the Chair for the number of staffs
3 specifically.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And
5 then part 2 was the OITs annual
6 personnel budget. How much is that
7 consumed by the maintenance of that
8 program?

9 MS. SCOTT: Okay.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Just
11 in case. I just want you to have the
12 full question if you have to get back
13 to us. Okay.

14 MS. SCOTT: Okay. Yeah. So
15 we'll get back to you about the number
16 of how much specifically for the
17 maintenance.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Okay.
19 And then the other question was the
20 angle savings for PHLConnected.

21 MS. SCOTT: For each
22 household?

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yes.

24 MS. SCOTT: I'll have to -- I

1 don't want to just blurb out random
2 numbers, so I'll get back to you about
3 that as well.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Okay.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. SCOTT: You are welcome.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
8 Thank you very much. The
9 Chair recognizes Councilman Quetcy
10 Lozada. Then we have Councilmember
11 Gilmore-Richardson and Councilmember
12 O'Rourke.

13 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I just
14 want to follow-up on a question that
15 Councilmember Young was just referring
16 to. If I'm not mistaken, I remember,
17 I believe it was the Mayor that
18 mentioned that HR would look at all of
19 the jobs that were -- that we had that
20 were open and available in the city
21 and determine which ones of them had
22 to be civil service, which one --
23 which ones could be exempt, which one
24 didn't need degrees.

1 Can you tell me if that
2 assessment has been done and how
3 successful it was and what -- if it
4 wasn't, what were some of the
5 challenges?

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Sure. I'm
7 happy to turn over to Candi Jones.
8 But -- so what you're referring to is
9 the executive order 0324. And it
10 really was our economic opportunity
11 executive order by which we were going
12 to assess the entire universe of
13 positions across the city, but
14 specifically exempt roles for other
15 pathways to qualification.

16 And so that work continues.
17 As you can imagine, there are a lot of
18 exempt titles and exempt titles
19 continue to be created. And that work
20 is in full steam. A lot of
21 adjustments have been made, and Candi
22 will speak to that, where we have
23 changed the qualifications to include
24 pathways other than a bachelor's

1 degree or advanced degree.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: So --

3 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: I'm sorry.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: We do
5 that to those positions that are civil
6 service.

7 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: We're doing
8 it for all positions.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Okay.
10 All of them?

11 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Yes.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Okay.

13 MS. JONES: So to that point
14 -- oh, sorry.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And
16 can you tell me how many thus far have
17 been filled and how many are still
18 vacant?

19 MS. JONES: So to answer the
20 first question, about 63 percent of
21 the civil service job descriptions do
22 not require a four-year degree. Those
23 jobs, that 63 percent is occupied by
24 about 19,000 employees. And so about

1 two thirds of the workforce are in
2 jobs that don't require four-year
3 degree. The other one-third are your,
4 like, medical classes, engineering,
5 financial accounting, where the degree
6 may be industry standard.

7 We've changed -- in 2024, we
8 changed 15 -- we identified 15 civil
9 service positions where we could
10 include an alternate path, and so
11 where there were an alternate
12 education requirement other than that
13 bachelor's degree. We've had some
14 significant success stories there.
15 For example, the land administrator
16 class, which is an IT title.

17 We actually were able to add
18 eight more employees to qualify for
19 that by removing that degree
20 requirement. For exempt titles, there
21 are approximately 1,200 job titles for
22 exempt roles. And then in 2024, about
23 10 percent of those job descriptions
24 were reviewed and then alternate

1 pathways identified.

2 And so I can give you the --
3 we have the comprehensive list in the
4 report on which job titles that we
5 changed for civil service and exempts.
6 We can provide that separately. But
7 we have made significant progress in
8 looking at those titles, identifying
9 alternate pathways to employment other
10 than the bachelor's degree
11 requirement.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Can we
13 as councilmembers receive a list of
14 what some of those available positions
15 are so that when we are out in the
16 community and folks are asking us, you
17 know, I want to come into the city's
18 workforce, what is available? Some
19 folks don't have access to phila.gov.
20 Or sometimes, you know, there's a true
21 digital divide in the city of
22 Philadelphia. So is there somewhere
23 where we can say, reach out to the
24 office, here's a paper?

1 MS. JONES: Absolutely.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I know
3 I used to get a paper copy back in the
4 day, so I don't know.

5 MS. JONES: We can.

6 Absolutely. We can. We're happy to
7 provide that information. Our
8 recruitment team is also happy to
9 partner because we're -- we've
10 realized that hosting a set of
11 information sessions is helpful for
12 community members to talk about these
13 opportunities that are available where
14 bachelor's degrees are not required.

15 And so we can provide you
16 with a comprehensive list, but we'd be
17 happy to do some more targeted
18 outreach and provide that information
19 one-on-one to community members as
20 well.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank
22 you.

23 MS. JONES: You are welcome.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And

1 then I have a question around
2 procurement. Do I have time still?
3 I'm taking advantage that he's
4 talking. At one of the Economic
5 Opportunity Review committee's
6 hearings, we heard concerns that
7 vendors were not notified when they
8 win or lose a bid. The guest speaker
9 stated that the lack of communication
10 leads to wasted time and resources for
11 businesses, particularly small and
12 minority owned vendors who rely on
13 timely feedback to improve their bids
14 and plan accordingly.

15 Implementation -- or
16 implementing a formal notification
17 system could enhance transparency and
18 efficiency in the procurement process.
19 Are you guys aware of this? And what
20 steps is your department taking to
21 implement a solution that ensures
22 vendors receive timely notification?

23 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So we are
24 very much aware of it and we have

1 created templates for standard forms
2 to be sent from our departmental
3 procurement teams to vendors for just
4 circumstances like what you've
5 described and others, and have
6 required that they be distributed
7 within a certain timeframe.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank
9 you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
11 Thank you. Katherine
12 Gilmore-Richardson, then Councilmember
13 Nicholas O'Rourke, Rue Landau down to
14 Councilman Jamie Gauthier.

15 But I just want to say one
16 thing just in terms of sense of
17 urgency. In this budget, we're
18 spending \$300 million more for FY26
19 than we spent for FY25. And so
20 hopefully as part of your plan to hire
21 folks and recruit folks, if we do
22 maybe like a massive recruitment
23 campaign like Power 99, WDAS. When
24 you turn on the TV, the city of

1 Philadelphia is hiring.

2 We got, like, a portal,
3 right? DC has something called like
4 DC1, where you type in, you go to this
5 portal and it's like pretty much
6 everything that the city has to offer.

7 And so again, we are
8 addressing the issue of poverty by
9 making sure that these vacancies we
10 have, we're putting people to work.
11 That might just be something to take
12 into consideration in terms of your
13 budget request, or if we are doing it,
14 maybe I missed it in the process.

15 MS. JONES: We do. So OHR
16 has a significant communications
17 budget for this current year and
18 hopefully for the upcoming year. And
19 so our Philly fully campaign, which
20 resulted in our 40 percent of our
21 increase in applications, so we're
22 doing just that, right? So
23 commercials, bus shelters, digital
24 media. So it's having a significant

1 impact.

2 But also to your point, so we
3 established two different websites
4 over the past year. So one is
5 work.philly.gov, which is that
6 centralized hub, right, where you can
7 see everything that we're recruiting
8 for and currently have open. But then
9 we also have employee.philly.gov,
10 which is our external facing Intranet.

11 And so anyone, current city
12 employees and city residents
13 interested in working for the city has
14 access to that Intranet site. So it
15 talks about all of the benefits of
16 working for the city, our
17 comprehensive benefits packages, all
18 of sort of kind of what that
19 experience looks like for an employee.
20 And so both of those websites were
21 also launched under our communications
22 campaign. It's certainly --

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 So when's the last time

1 you've been on -- it's not the

2 Breakfast Club. What's -- Mikey

3 Dread? We,

4 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: We are -- we

5 are --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 I'm going to keep -- I'm going to keep

8 --

9 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: --

10 diligently working on it

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 -- because we got to meet people where

13 they at, right?

14 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 So we get you a Frankie

17 Darcell, Patty Jackson.

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So we've

19 been -- we are working very, very

20 diligently in creating partnerships

21 with all the media, WURD. If this

22 face needs to be on media, yes.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 That's all.

1 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Look, we're partners in this, and so
4 we just thinking different ways to get
5 the word out to people.

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Right.

7 MS. JONES: No, absolutely.

8 We have this -- so this year I did
9 engage with Patty Jackson. We were on
10 the show.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Okay.

13 MS. JONES: And so we do have
14 those relationships and we'll continue
15 those partnerships.

16 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Absolutely.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 Yeah. We get on the radio
19 like, oh, we hiring as a city. Here's
20 the process to how you go about doing
21 it.

22 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: We hear you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I
24 just call it meeting people where they

1 at. And again, we want to be partners
2 in this. Majority Leader -- Member
3 Thomas.

4 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Just
5 in the energy of the Council
6 President, he just inspired me.

7 Quick question. Have we ever
8 thought about partnering with content
9 creators? Right? That's a whole new
10 thing out there. So have we ever
11 thought about partnering with content
12 creators to be able -- and just same
13 energy as Councilmember Young. Just
14 to be a little more innovative in
15 making sure that we're meeting people
16 where they are?

17 Sorry, Council President.

18 Sorry, Majority Leader Richardson.

19 Just wondering if that's
20 something that might be in the works.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

22 Like if Waldo was going to
23 say, city of Philadelphia is hiring
24 then, you know, we probably, like, the

1 vacancies would be done tomorrow.

2 MS. JONES: So we -- I'm

3 sorry. Yes. So a part of our

4 communications campaign is digital

5 media strategies, right, how to

6 leverage the current technology. And

7 so this current year, we're looking to

8 kind of lean into our Instagram

9 presence more because I think that

10 that's a space for opportunity that we

11 haven't.

12 So to agree with you, we do

13 have to meet the people where they

14 are. And I think a lot of our

15 recruitment efforts needs to be also

16 on Instagram and on social media

17 pages. Agreed.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

19 Okay.

20 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Thank

21 you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 You're welcome. Majority Leader

24 Gilmore-Richardson, then Member

1 O'Rourke.

2 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

3 RICHARDSON: Great. Thank you,
4 Council President. And I neglected to
5 say this earlier. We also want to
6 thank our OIT commissioner, Melissa
7 Scott. President, you mentioned the
8 new Land Bank website, and I was
9 actually on there this morning. And
10 the mobile interface is even great.

11 So we just want to thank you
12 and your team for your work and for
13 the excellent meeting that we had to
14 talk about some of the work even in
15 the recreation centers. So I just
16 wanted to put that on the record. I
17 didn't see you sitting up there and I
18 neglected to say it, so thank you
19 very, very much.

20 I wanted to go back to
21 something that we have been working on
22 since last year. My colleague,
23 Councilmember Harrity, sort of,
24 alluded to this regarding the

1 advantages of working for the city.

2 And so I wanted to thank
3 Vanessa Garrett Harley for the meeting
4 that we had. And we continue to work
5 through the process regarding the
6 childcare study. You know, that was
7 something that was important to me
8 last year. And also paid parental
9 leave which is something that we had
10 worked through in the last budget
11 process, and I intend to work through
12 again this budget process. I just
13 want to put that on the record.

14 Because that was something
15 that I thought we achieved that we did
16 not achieve that I wasn't told until
17 the last minute. So I'm just putting
18 that on the record.

19 But I wanted to go to the
20 program when I initially asked about
21 the childcare support. In doing the
22 study, I was told that initially those
23 dollars were transitioned to set up
24 the program, Wellthy. And I will tell

1 you, I think it's a wonderful program.
2 I think it's a great program to ensure
3 that our employees who need, you know,
4 last minute support and help are able
5 to get that during their journey. And
6 it's not just for young people, it's,
7 you know, for, you know, for their
8 caregiver as well.

9 So I wanted to ask how many
10 city employees have taken advantage of
11 the program thus far?

12 MS. JONES: So for a number
13 of signups for participation, we have
14 678. For cumulative days requested,
15 719. And then for the days used of
16 that is 603. The average number of
17 backup days that are being used by
18 employees that are enrolled is about
19 five days.

20 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

21 RICHARDSON: Okay.

22 MS. JONES: And then we have
23 some additional data that I can send
24 separately about the types of

1 employees that are enrolled. The age
2 of the dependents and things like
3 that, we can share.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

5 RICHARDSON: And they can use up to
6 eight days, right?

7 MS. JONES: Correct.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

9 RICHARDSON: But you can't carry over,
10 but you can use up to eight days per
11 year.

12 MS. JONES: Yes, correct.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

14 RICHARDSON: Okay. And then you could
15 also self-identify a provider and then
16 get reimbursed, right?

17 MS. JONES: Correct. Yes.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

19 RICHARDSON: Okay. And I just found
20 out about this yesterday, so I got to
21 put this on the record. I just found
22 out -- I think you know where I'm
23 going.

24 But the amended W-2s for

1 those employees, I don't think anyone
2 knew that when they signed up for the
3 program, that the amount that the city
4 subsidizes for them to receive the
5 care outside of the co-pay is now
6 added to their wages as a part of
7 their wages, which may change the tax
8 bracket for some of these employees.

9 So I don't think people knew
10 that when they signed up. And I don't
11 know that you-all necessarily knew
12 that. Maybe that's coming from the
13 program. But I need to understand
14 that because people signed up for the
15 program thinking once they pay the
16 co-pay, that that would be it. That
17 because of the benefit it would be
18 subsidized.

19 But now folks are receiving
20 -- I mean, it's almost April 15th, the
21 tax deadline. They're just receiving
22 amended W-2s, W-2Cs from the city
23 regarding an increase in their wages
24 and they didn't know anything about it

1 when they signed up for the program.

2 So I think that because the
3 city probably didn't know when that
4 occurred, that the city should not
5 hold those employees. The 678
6 employees that you mentioned, those
7 folks should not be held accountable
8 for that this year. Because they
9 signed up for the program under the
10 pretense that once they pay the
11 co-pay, that that was it.

12 Now, let's -- I'll give you
13 an example. Say if they use, you
14 know, the average five days, and that
15 was \$2,000, you know, worth of subsidy
16 that the city provided for that
17 period, now that \$2,000, say if they
18 made 50,000, now it says they made
19 52,000. But they weren't aware of
20 that when they signed up for the
21 program. I get it moving forward,
22 because you can tell them that, but I
23 don't think that that's fair, and I
24 think that that should be rectified

1 for those employees.

2 MS. JONES: I'd like to ask
3 Marsha Greene-Jones, the deputy over
4 benefits to come up to offer comment
5 on the question.

6 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

7 RICHARDSON: And I just -- I literally
8 -- this was not in my questions. I
9 literally just found out about this
10 yesterday. And I want to put on the
11 record that I think it's a great --
12 like, I really think it's a great
13 program, and I applaud the city for
14 standing it up. But I just think that
15 for this year, you can't hold those
16 employees accountable because when
17 they signed up for the program, they
18 weren't told that those charges that
19 the city would be covering for them
20 would be added to their actual wage
21 amount where it makes it seem as if
22 they made more money than they did,
23 you know.

24 MS. GREENE-JONES: Marsha

1 Greene-Jones, deputy director of human
2 resources responsible for health and
3 welfare. Thank you very much for your
4 question today.

5 One of the things that the
6 city did realize later on in the
7 process is that because this was
8 considered to be income, it had to be
9 taxable income. We made a concerted
10 effort upon us realizing this piece to
11 actually get out W-2s, corrected W-2s
12 to employees no later than February
13 19th.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
15 RICHARDSON: Okay.

16 MS. GREENE-JONES: And we
17 also sent out additional
18 communications to every single
19 employee who was enrolled in a
20 program, notify the -- notifying them
21 of the fact, number one, that this was
22 taxable income, and number two, that
23 they would receive a corrected W2 no
24 later than February 19th.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

2 RICHARDSON: Right. No, and I
3 understand that. Meaning when they
4 signed up for the program, were the
5 678 employees made aware that this
6 would be taxable income? Meaning they
7 thought, I believe they were supposed
8 to pay the co-pay, the \$15 or \$20,
9 whatever it is, and then that was it.
10 You understand what I'm saying?
11 Because it was a benefit. I don't
12 believe that anyone knew when they
13 initially utilized this program that
14 it would be added as actual income.

15 MS. GREENE-JONES: I
16 completely understand your question.
17 The issue is, more importantly, is the
18 fact that it was income provided by
19 the city, and we are the first city in
20 the United States. I don't know that
21 anyone realizes that, in the United
22 States to actually offer this benefit,
23 so we're very proud of it.

24 And one of the things that we

1 are committed to is continuing to
2 communicate more effectively with
3 employees as we proceed with the
4 program.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: No, I agree. I think
7 it's a great program. I want to
8 underscore that. But is there a way
9 to calculate how much that is for the
10 city to cover that this year, and then
11 next year moving forward or as of now
12 moving forward, just when people use
13 the benefit, when city employees use
14 the benefit, to say this is to be
15 charged as a part of your actual
16 income.

17 I'm not disagreeing with you.
18 I think it's a wonderful program. I
19 really, really do. And I think it was
20 an important benefit, you know, as
21 people were coming back to work full-
22 time as well. But I don't think they
23 knew in advance that this would be a
24 part of their income.

1 And for some people who don't
2 have the benefit of making certain
3 salaries, it changes their tax
4 bracket. And so, you know, we talked
5 -- I heard one of my colleagues,
6 Councilman Rue Landau talk earlier
7 about, you know, like, pay equity and
8 how some employees were making 37,000,
9 I think you said, in one department
10 and others were making 140.

11 And so for the folks making
12 140, it doesn't matter to them. But
13 for someone who may be right on the
14 cusp of, you know, their taxable
15 income going from one percentage to
16 the next, it does matter.

17 MS. JONES: I think we can --

18 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: Oh, go
19 ahead.

20 MS. JONES: Sorry. I think
21 we can work with finance on that piece
22 to understand the total impact to
23 employees for this past year and then
24 make some considerations and decisions

1 based on that. I don't have the total
2 number, but I completely understand
3 the impact.

4 And I agree with you that
5 understanding that it is part of
6 income may change the utilization for
7 some employees.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -
9 RICHARDSON: Right.

10 MS. JONES: I agree.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

12 RICHARDSON: Right. And just to see
13 how much it is, how many people, you
14 know, were impacted in total, and then
15 what we can do as a city to support
16 those workers who utilize the benefit
17 unknowingly that this would be added
18 to their taxable income. That's all
19 I'm saying. Then going forward, at
20 least they know.

21 MS. JONES: Agreed.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

23 RICHARDSON: Right. You know what I
24 mean?

1 MS. JONES: And we can
2 follow-up once we have that
3 information, I can share that with you
4 as well.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: Okay. I'll submit the
7 balance of my questions because I have
8 a lot more, but I'll submit them for
9 the record.

10 MS. JONES: Thank you.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

12 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you very
13 much. And thank you for making us
14 number one again. Okay.

15 MS. JONES: My pleasure.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Chair recognize Councilmember
18 O'Rourke.

19 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

20 Thank you, Mr. President. And thank
21 you for joining us. Commissioner
22 Hovey?

23 MR. HOVEY: Yes.

24 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

1 Yes, sir. I want to
2 acknowledge 12 days in and you already
3 happen to sit before the council.
4 Courageous man. I thank you for your
5 -- for your service already. I did
6 want to say that it's important for
7 both council and the public to know
8 the vital role that administrative
9 departments like procurement play in
10 delivering public services and
11 maintaining public goods.

12 But the question I had has to
13 do a little bit with prison
14 procurement. Do you -- you may not
15 necessarily know yet. Is the person
16 who deals with prison procurement here
17 today? They might better come and
18 deal with this question.

19 MR. HOVEY: No.

20 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: No.

21 Well, we'll shoot.

22 MR. HOVEY: But if you ask
23 your question --

24 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

1 Yeah, we'll try.

2 MR. HOVEY: We could
3 certainly get you an answer if it's
4 not something that my team --

5 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: No
6 worries. No worries. Could you
7 provide us with a brief overview of
8 how your team works with other
9 departments to evaluate new and
10 existing vendors and contracts?

11 MR. HOVEY: I'm sorry?

12 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Can
13 you -- could you provide us with a
14 brief overview of how your team works
15 with other departments to evaluate new
16 and existing vendors and contracts?

17 MR. HOVEY: Okay. So I'm
18 going to let my deputy talk a little
19 bit about the existing process, and
20 then I want to talk just very briefly
21 about some of the initiatives that I
22 have in mind.

23 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

24 Okay. Okay.

1 MS. TOMPKINS: LaShawnda

2 Tompkins, Deputy Commissioner. Can
3 you ask the question one more time?

4 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Yes.

5 Could you provide just a brief
6 overview of how your team works with
7 other departments to evaluate new and
8 existing vendors and contracts?

9 MS. TOMPKINS: New and
10 existing vendors. Okay. So when we
11 work with the departments on the
12 contracts, we meet with them so we can
13 understand what their needs are and
14 what that assessment is.

15 When we're looking at MWDSBE
16 participation, we direct them to look
17 at OYO's registry, do a -- just
18 cascade a registry to see what vendors
19 there are that can help with the needs
20 that you -- that you are looking for.

21 Also, when we are posting the
22 bids and PHL contracts, they're going
23 to post a bid and then it's going to
24 be visible to all of the vendors that

1 are certified with the city. So
2 that's how they'll be able to pull in
3 the vendors that provide the services
4 that they're looking for.

5 And if they have any
6 businesses that need to get certified
7 with the city, we put them in contact
8 with our vendor engagement unit. If
9 they're a local business entity, we
10 educate them about the local business
11 entity certification and kind of go
12 through all the different things that
13 they should be proactively doing
14 before looking to participate with the
15 City of Philadelphia.

16 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

17 Thank you, Deputy
18 Commissioner. I'm going to ask the
19 balance of my question because I just
20 heard the bail. I'm going to get this
21 out and then please respond if you
22 can. I'd like to discuss this one
23 contract that actually concerns me in
24 particular for a moment. YesCare.

1 YesCare previously known as
2 Corizon has provided healthcare at the
3 Philadelphia Department of Prisons for
4 years. Across the country though,
5 they have been sued more than a
6 thousand times over claims of
7 substandard care. Their current
8 iteration appears to only have been
9 created to allow them to pay pennies
10 on the dollar for many of these
11 claims.

12 Locally, we're still seeing
13 more deaths in our jails than in New
14 York City, yet the size of this
15 contract has increased by \$140 million
16 since 2022. While we are not here to
17 discuss one contract, it is good
18 reminder of the responsibility that we
19 have to ensure that we are doing our
20 best by our city.

21 My question is, what range of
22 options are available to the city when
23 a contractor is not meeting their
24 obligations?

1 MR. HOVEY: So contracts
2 could be terminated for cause or
3 default. I mean for cause or at --
4 for convenience. Most contracts are
5 written that way. And generally if
6 you're going to cancel a contract,
7 I've actually never engaged in a -- in
8 a cancellation for cause. And that's
9 just because of the hurdles that arise
10 legally and the costs associated. But
11 you always do have the ability to
12 cancel for convenience. But that does
13 mean that you have to go through the
14 sourcing and be ready for the next --
15 the next step to replace what's going
16 away.

17 And one of the things that
18 sort of answers the first part of your
19 question and this one, too, is kind of
20 how we'll be handling procurements in
21 the future. And one of the things
22 that I'm looking forward to to do here
23 is really push the organization to a
24 more strategic sourcing direction

1 where we work very collaboratively
2 with our stakeholders, not just in a
3 particular area, but across sort of
4 associated needs or where there's, you
5 know, sort of equivalent needs across
6 departments to leverage the community
7 of vendors to the maximum ability and
8 to sort of front load contracts and
9 get them in place before needed
10 whenever possible.

11 But also to look at --
12 strategic sourcing also looks at all
13 of these questions up front in terms
14 of what are the performance standards,
15 what are the risks associated with
16 this contract that could come into
17 play? And then you sort of measure
18 that during the process. And that
19 measurement is typically done at the
20 departmental level by the stakeholders
21 who are part of a scoring team.

22 So actually when I came here,
23 I was impressed the city does do some
24 strategic sourcing. They have

1 contracts in place across some
2 sectors, but that's something that we
3 truly want to maximize. That's sort
4 of the state of the art in
5 procurement. People are usually put
6 to sleep by procurement content, but
7 that's sort of state of the art for
8 procurement in the private and the
9 public sector.

10 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: For
11 whatever it's worth, some evaluation
12 about this particular contract, like I
13 said, I'm not here to talk about just
14 one, but this is very troubling to me.

15 MR. HOVEY: We'll look into
16 this.

17 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: That
18 the folks who we are incarcerating in
19 our city are getting substandard care
20 by a widely known bad -- may be bad
21 actor is a bad word, but certainly
22 offering substandard care.

23 And so if there's some way to
24 be able to shift on that and do

1 whatever we can do to find somebody
2 else that might be in the best benefit
3 of us as a city to make sure that we
4 are treating people correctly, even
5 our citizens who are behind the wall.

6 I did have other questions
7 I'll submit for -- to be sent in. But
8 I did have some questions around hard
9 numbers around attrition. If you
10 could provide the city's attrition
11 rate for the past three years, and if
12 you've seen any significant spikes in
13 departures following the return to
14 office policy. If you could submit
15 that, I won't have to talk -- I don't
16 want to take time.

17 MS. JONES: Three years. I'm
18 sorry. I didn't hear the -- attrition
19 for over the last three years?

20 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Yes.
21 Attrition rates for the past three
22 years and if there were any
23 significant spikes in departures after
24 the return to office policy went into

1 place.

2 MS. JONES: Okay.

3 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

4 Thank you, Mr. President and thank you
5 all for your responses.

6 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: We certainly
7 can provide you that information,
8 Councilmember O'Rourke. Thank you for
9 the questions. I will also say that
10 there is a mechanism within the
11 procurement process for how we review
12 performance of our contracted
13 partners. Happy to have a more
14 specific conversation with not only
15 you, but of course the impacted
16 department to make sure that we are
17 understanding what that impact and how
18 that vendor has been performing
19 relative to the concerns that you've
20 raised.

21 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

22 Thank you. Hallelujah. Appreciate
23 you. Yes.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 Thank you. So as we wrap up this
2 round before we go out to lunch, I'm
3 going off the queue. Councilman Rue
4 Landau, then Jamie Gauthier, Young,
5 and we will wrap up with the gentleman
6 Harrity. That's the line.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
8 you, Council President. Got a few
9 more --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
11 And I just want to just also say just
12 because we are on the timeframe for
13 your break, that we want to be direct
14 and a direct response, please.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: I have
16 a few HR questions, then some OIT
17 questions. I've got a couple
18 procurement questions. I'll just put
19 on the record. I'll start with HR. I
20 think you have all done a great job to
21 start modernizing our hiring process.
22 I worked for the city starting in 2008
23 and it was very different than it is
24 now. There seems to be two different

1 websites, work at philly or, and --
2 work at Philly and jobs. And I think
3 it's really important that we
4 streamline how people are thinking
5 about what they want to do and how
6 they get there. So most people want a
7 job and when you Google that, it's
8 going to bring you to the job site,
9 which looks much more archaic than
10 your work site.

11 I love how your work site is
12 connected into categories. If you
13 want to work in public safety or
14 public health, when you get to the job
15 site, you might know that you want a
16 city job. You might know that you
17 want an entry level job at the law
18 department because you might want to
19 be a paralegal, but you don't know
20 what to call it. Would love to hear
21 your comments on how to fix that and
22 how to interconnect both of these.

23 I also want to put out two
24 more questions while we're there. If

1 there's any obstacles in the civil
2 service system right now that is
3 hampering your efforts to hire, like,
4 how long the lists last when you do
5 create a list to moving on to the next
6 job. And three, I wanted to know
7 about your successes with Fair Chance
8 Hiring. I also have a couple of IT
9 questions, but can we just get quick
10 answers on that first?

11 MS. SCOTT: Thank you,
12 Councilwoman. I'll answer the
13 question about the website. So part
14 of our request in the budget is, and I
15 mentioned earlier for the
16 re-platforming what we will do is
17 it'll allow for a more modernized look
18 and feel similar to what you see on
19 the landing page and similar to what
20 you see in the work site. Right now,
21 the platform that our engineering team
22 is working on doesn't allow for those
23 functions and features. But when we
24 re-platform, we'll be able to work

1 with departments such as HR in order
2 to bring back -- bring that
3 modernization, but also to organize
4 the data so it's more user friendly
5 for individuals to be able to click
6 and get to where they need to go
7 quickly.

8 MS. JONES: Okay. And I
9 think that addresses the beginning,
10 but then there's also a piece when you
11 go to the actual application part,
12 right? And that's also -- that can
13 also be a part of the barrier to the
14 process. It's very lengthy, it's a
15 little cumbersome. And so we are
16 launching the new application track --
17 the applicant tracking system which
18 was funded in this year's budget. And
19 so that is, I think the third part.
20 Not just the landing page for work,
21 and then the jobs page. But when
22 you're actually going through the
23 process of applying for a position,
24 that also needs to be streamlined. It

1 also needs to be kind of user

2 friendly, right? Agile.

3 And so the new applicant

4 tracking system in July will then

5 cover that last piece, right? So once

6 you engage the applicant, once they go

7 on the website, that'll be a

8 streamlined process. For time to hire

9 specifically, that applicant tracking

10 system will also assist that. So I

11 did send the visual for time to hire

12 and there's a -- no, so there's a

13 component part that is -- that we talk

14 about. There's, like, a departmental

15 part, that section in the beginning --

16 in the middle of that when you're

17 engaging candidates for interviewing.

18 The scheduling process may take some

19 time. That onboarding piece that

20 isn't necessarily owned by OHR, but we

21 are certainly responsible for the

22 entire kind of body of work, right,

23 from list to hire.

24 And so the applicant tracking

1 system will also take care of that
2 piece as well, right? There's going
3 to be scheduling components in there,
4 there's going to be onboarding pieces
5 and constant candidate communication.
6 And so we're really looking at it
7 holistically, not just the first thing
8 you see when you're looking for the
9 job, but the websites that shepherd
10 you through the entire parts of the
11 process. Sorry.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
13 you. I'm just -- can I throw in a --
14 just a couple of -- it's AI. You like
15 AI.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 You can ask the questions. She can
18 provide them to you for -- in writing.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay.
20 So I wanted to know the successes with
21 Fair Chance Hiring to get people with
22 criminal records jobs. To OIT, can
23 you speak to the amount of funding the
24 city spends on automated decision

1 making systems or artificial
2 intelligence and any plans or policies
3 you have or developing to govern the
4 use of AI within city governments
5 departments?

6 And then also wanted to dig
7 down a little bit more into
8 PHLConnectED that connects families
9 with K-12 students to internet access.
10 How many students or kids are signed
11 up for PHLConnectED? How do you
12 measure the impact of that program?
13 Do you think there will ever be the
14 potential to expand the program to
15 help low income Philadelphia residents
16 who don't have K-12 students at home?
17 And also we know that internet bills
18 strain household budgets. What's the
19 estimated annual savings for families
20 enrolled in PHLConnectED. How does
21 this free up income for other
22 essentials like food and rent?

23 For procurement, I'd love to
24 know how we're doing with OPAL, which

1 is probably a mix here. And also
2 following on Majority Leader Kathy
3 Gilmore-Richardson's great work on our
4 contracting process. Wanted to dig in
5 deeper to hear about the RFP process
6 in general. What changes you've made
7 to make contracting easier, better,
8 and faster with the City of
9 Philadelphia. Thank you very much.
10 I'll put them all in writing for you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Thank you very much. The Chair
13 recognizes Councilman Jamie Gauthier,
14 the next, Councilmember Young and
15 wrapping us up for today prior to our
16 break will be Councilmember Jim
17 Harrity. Just please be direct with
18 your questions as well as your
19 response.

20 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

21 Thank you. My questions are for the
22 CCME. Thank you. I'm very excited
23 that my council district will be home
24 to the city's new state-of-the-art for

1 forensic science center, and I'm
2 heartened to hear that PPD will
3 implement a comprehensive staffing
4 plan to recruit, train, and retain
5 highly qualified forensic scientists
6 and support personnel, as well as to
7 have a strong community engagement
8 component to help Philadelphia
9 students get interested in STEM.

10 So my questions are: One,
11 are we exploring a school or community
12 college to forensic scientist
13 pipeline? Can you speak to any plans
14 to use these positions as a workforce
15 development opportunity for
16 Philadelphians in need of a stable
17 income? And which workforce training
18 providers do you plan to partner with?
19 And what kind of budget will be
20 dedicated to creating a training and
21 hiring pipeline?

22 MS. DE FRIES: Thank you for
23 the question, Councilwoman Gauthier.
24 I've had some initial conversations

1 with managing director, Michael Garvey
2 about the expansion and the needs
3 within the department as they move to
4 the new location. In fact, at the
5 five-year budget hearing, we followed
6 up with some of those conversations.
7 The -- in particular, the needs around
8 technician, we've been talking to
9 Community College of Philadelphia and
10 adapting some of their programs that
11 they already have in the life sciences
12 for technicians to be relevant for the
13 forensic technicians. The scientist
14 level positions do require four-year
15 degree. And but the issue is, is that
16 there's no direct connection from the
17 community college to those four-year
18 degree program.

19 So we've been talking about
20 how we can get CCP connected to those
21 local four-year degree programs so
22 that there's an accelerated path from
23 CCP into those four-year degree
24 programs so that they can qualify for

1 the scientists' roles. But yes, there
2 are ongoing conversations. We're not
3 yet at what I would identify on the
4 CCME side of the equation about what
5 the workforce development program or
6 budget would be. But I know that the
7 police office has -- and Michael
8 Garvey in particular has been working
9 on that and putting out an RFP for
10 training as well in facilities around
11 and in Philadelphia. So we can get
12 more information about that for you.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I
14 would love to see a serious effort in
15 this area. I know that we already
16 have amazingly skilled forensic staff,
17 but I want this to be an opportunity
18 for people who live here. And so, you
19 know, I would love to see an actual
20 budget, an actual plan that takes
21 people from our school system all the
22 way to forensic sciences and all of
23 the jobs in between to go along with
24 the expansion of our center.

1 MS. DE FRIES: One of the
2 specific career pathways for CCME is
3 in the STEM area, and this is a
4 particular passion of mine as well.
5 And in particular, I think one of the
6 other aspects that we've been talking
7 with the Science Center around is CTE
8 programs in the life sciences and in
9 the biosciences space. So that is
10 also something that we need to connect
11 to this initiative as well.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
13 Yeah. And just to -- just in closing,
14 I think one of the things that excited
15 me most about having the forensics lab
16 on the corridor of science is that
17 there are so many partners that we can
18 engage in this training, and I hope
19 that we take advantage of that.

20 MS. JONES: I just wanted to
21 quickly follow-up on that comment. So
22 OHR does work with the -- there's a
23 CTE program for biotechnology. And so
24 we use that for the fingerprinting.

1 So that's not the title that requires
2 the four-year degree, but perhaps we
3 can bridge though that particular
4 cohort with a future CCME program to
5 your point, right, so that they can go
6 from that program that requires high
7 school into a four-year degree
8 program, perhaps through CME as a --
9 as a conduit.

10 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

11 That'd be great. Thank you. Thank
12 you, Council President.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

14 Thank you. The Chair recognizes
15 Councilman Jeffrey J. Young.

16 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
17 you, Mr. President. Just two quick
18 questions. One is for procurement. I
19 met with a vendor of -- let's just say
20 like swag gear, right? And we went
21 over some numbers. And that vendor, a
22 local minority vendor here in
23 Philadelphia, cannot compete with some
24 of the applicants who apply for this

1 RFP who are, you know, have direct
2 connects to China, essentially, right?
3 So what are we doing about -- or what
4 can we do to provide those more
5 opportunities for local vendors where
6 we have to compete in this global
7 market, particularly for items like
8 swag items that, you know, every
9 department has -- uses and
10 particularly in the industry that can
11 provide jobs here locally.

12 MR. HOVEY: I'll go first.
13 So we give a preference to local
14 businesses currently which advantages
15 them in the -- in the bidding process.
16 We still have to follow the bidding
17 rules, but beyond that, I'm going to
18 turn it over to LaShawnda.

19 MS. TOMPKINS: Deputy
20 Commissioner Tompkins. So we have the
21 LBPI -- the LBPI initiative, which
22 increases the threshold for LBE
23 businesses. We also have the LBE
24 preference that Commissioner Hovey

1 spoke about. And also there are --
2 there are micro and SOPs, like small
3 order purchases that these LBEs can
4 take advantage of as well, which are
5 more of an informal bidding process,
6 which will allow them to work with
7 departments, build a relationship, and
8 also just do more business with the
9 city through those smaller projects
10 and kind of work their way up.

11 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So this
12 one vendor in particular had a
13 relationship with the city, had
14 previous contracts with the city. But
15 again, because of how things are
16 shifting globally, you know, the
17 opportunity to compete just wasn't
18 there. And so what are we -- or how
19 can we increase those chances?
20 Because I looked at the city's awards
21 for that particular type of contract,
22 and none of them were local. None of
23 them were local. So I was just trying
24 to figure out what can we do to

1 increase that participation in those
2 types of industries where we know that
3 there are people in Philadelphia that
4 can fulfill those roles.

5 MR. HOVEY: One of the things
6 that I saw in my last venture was that
7 as soon as we -- and we raised it
8 several times over the last few years,
9 once we raised the small purchase or
10 here the micro purchase threshold, we
11 saw an associated level of
12 participation of smaller businesses
13 because things could be more easily
14 directed in terms of awards to local
15 businesses or small businesses. In
16 that case it was small businesses.

17 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: So what
18 I think, Mr. President, what I'll do
19 is I'm going to share the information
20 that I have in writing with you all
21 with a couple questions that I have to
22 see if you can answer that on how we
23 can allow more opportunities for our
24 local businesses to compete for city

1 business rather than some business
2 that is based in San Francisco, but
3 really is based out of China,

4 CAO DUCHAUSSEE:

5 Councilmember, I appreciate the
6 question and the sentiment. I will
7 say that this year for the first time
8 during our, kind of, budget
9 preparation process, we embedded
10 procurement in the departmental
11 conversations, right? And so what
12 this allows us to do, because similar
13 to OHR, we do have a federated model
14 for procurement, and you have
15 departments with their own procurement
16 teams. But what -- embedding
17 Procurement, big P, the Procurement
18 Department into those conversations
19 allows us to do, is to identify those
20 opportunities that maybe the
21 departments are not aware of, right?

22 So there's a component of
23 education to this, not necessarily for
24 the vendor, but for our departmental

1 partners. And we're working very hard
2 to embed ourselves in those
3 conversations about procurement
4 planning, contract planning, so that
5 we can always lift up the
6 opportunities for our local businesses
7 and other businesses that are
8 registered in the city.

9 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
10 you. And just one more question just
11 about the Bureau of Administrative
12 Adjudication. I saw in the five-year
13 plan. The goal was 120 days for some
14 of these -- to review some of these
15 cases. But FY25, it was 90 days. So
16 why are we taking longer to review
17 these cases than -- why we have a goal
18 of a longer review period than a
19 previous year?

20 CAO DUCHAUSSEE: So we are
21 trying to -- and I will ask Melissa
22 Andre to come up to speak to the
23 question. But what we've seen is a
24 significant increase in some areas

1 that are under the purview of the
2 Office of Administrative Review. Such
3 significant uptick that we do have to
4 build in more time to hear appeals and
5 so on. So while we appreciate and
6 agree that we don't want that time
7 limit to go up, we are also being very
8 intentional about putting a specific
9 performance metric to even
10 exponentially increase number of
11 hearings that we're experiencing in
12 that area.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: But
14 similar to the line of questioning
15 from Councilwoman Gauthier, you know,
16 folks, when they file an appeal, they
17 don't know that their appeal is filed
18 particularly for like a parking
19 ticket, right? They don't know it's
20 filed. They don't hear anything.
21 Everything is just online. They don't
22 get to talk to a person, they submit
23 it, and six months later they get a
24 decision, right? So, like, how can we

1 streamline that process?

2 MS. ANDRE: So I think it
3 really depends on what kind of hearing
4 you're talking about. Oh, I'm sorry.
5 Again, my name is Melissa Andre,
6 executive director, Office of
7 Administrative Review. So I really
8 think it depends on what type of
9 hearing you're talking about and what
10 kind of appeal you filed. So if you
11 filed an appeal with the parking
12 authority for your red light or your
13 speed camera ticket, you're getting
14 notification that you filed a ticket
15 and the timeframe it's supposed to
16 take. If you are requesting an
17 in-person hearing, then those time
18 frames are much shorter than an online
19 review because of the backlog of the
20 online reviews. So I think if you
21 could provide me with maybe a specific
22 example of the type of hearing you're
23 talking about, or --

24 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: It's

1 not -- it's the hearings that the BAA
2 would adjudicate, essentially, not the
3 red light tickets, not those, not the
4 camera tickets. We get that. These
5 are regular parking tickets that folks
6 would get.

7 MS. ANDRE: Uh-huh. Yes. So
8 I think because of the increase of
9 just the parking tickets that are
10 being issued, it caused us a backlog.
11 We had kind of come up to a really
12 good place after COVID because there
13 was so many -- there wasn't any
14 parking tickets being issued, but I
15 think there's been a very -- a
16 significant increase in parking
17 tickets and that caused a delay. And
18 so now we're trying to get ourselves
19 back up to speed. And I think the
20 problem occurs when the online ticket
21 requests are being delayed because
22 we're being in flood -- the boot and
23 tows have gone up. So there are two
24 different types of hearings.

1 And so if you walk into the
2 BAA today, you'll get a hearing on
3 demand because your ticket -- your car
4 has been booted or towed. But the --
5 that has taken a back -- that has been
6 prioritized over the people with just
7 a regular parking ticket because of
8 the influx of the boot and the tows
9 that are -- that we are experiencing.
10 So we're trying to level it -- level
11 it out. We've hired approximately six
12 new hearing officers this past year
13 and we're getting to a better place.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

15 Thank you very much. Member Harrity,
16 take us home, sir.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

18 Council President, I'm going to make
19 it real fast. You can give me all
20 these in writing, and I'm going to
21 read them off pretty quick though.
22 Your testimony states that -- this
23 procurement. I'm sorry. Your
24 testimony states that department aims

1 to reduce the average bidding timeline
2 from 225 days in 2024 to 200 days in
3 2026. The public works bidding
4 process, according to the testimony,
5 currently takes an average of 140 days
6 with the FY2026 target remaining 140
7 days.

8 How does the timeline compare
9 to similar programs in other cities?
10 Are there any planned efficiencies
11 that could further reduce the
12 timeframe, especially for public works
13 like Rebuild? So you know where I'm
14 getting at. And does this timeline
15 lead to a disparity between the
16 initial project cost and the final
17 cost?

18 MR. HOVEY: What was the last
19 one?

20 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Okay.
21 Does the timeline lead to a disparity
22 between the initial project cost and
23 the final cost? And that's especially
24 relating to Rebuild. And that'll be

1 that for me, my brother.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Thank you. Do you want to give a
4 brief response as well as provide the
5 information in writing?

6 MR. HOVEY: Sure. So
7 comparing to other cities or agencies,
8 the timelines are pretty consistent
9 with traditional public procurement
10 agencies that haven't gone through any
11 sort of modernization and upgrade.
12 Are there -- are there initiatives to
13 decrease the cycle time? There will
14 be. Through the implementation of
15 OPAL, we'll be looking also at our
16 business processes to see if we can
17 drive that down. And also, as I spoke
18 to before, the more we engage in
19 strategic sourcing, the more we have
20 pre-positioned contracts. And some of
21 those can even play in the space of
22 public works when it comes to the
23 engineering design and planning.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Okay.

1 MR. HOVEY: The -- it gets a
2 little more difficult in the actual
3 work, work, the construction type
4 work, but that can be --

5 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Yeah,
6 I was in the construction business my
7 whole life.

8 MR. HOVEY: And then the last
9 one, does it create a cost disparity?
10 Absolutely. The longer the
11 solicitation period, that is one of --
12 that is a big driver to cost in both
13 actualities at the end, but also cost
14 built in into the bid price due to
15 perceived risk.

16 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Okay.
17 I'm not going to -- just going to --

18 MR. HOVEY: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 Well, thank you very much. We want to
21 thank all of you for your testimony.
22 We will stand in recess until
23 2:00 p.m. And I'll ask everyone if we
24 could be back to start at exactly

1 2:00 p.m., so we can get two full
2 rounds in it. And I'd rather get --
3 before everybody start getting up,
4 this is important. I'd rather get
5 responses on the record as opposed to
6 written responses. And so the only
7 way we can do that if we start on
8 time, and then you can ask as many
9 questions you can within your
10 timeframe as opposed to getting the
11 information back in writing. So we
12 want to be transparent in this
13 budgetary process.

14 Thank you very much,
15 everyone. See you at 2:00.

16 (Council at ease.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 Good afternoon, everyone.

19 Good afternoon, everyone.

20 We will now conclude -- we
21 will now continue. We will now
22 continue our budget hearing.

23 And with that being said,
24 Ms. Helen Loughead, can you please

1 call the next panel?

2 CHIEF CLERK: Yes. We have
3 Kimberly Ali, Commissioner for
4 Philadelphia Department of Human
5 Services. We'd also like to call up
6 Dr. Debora Carrera, Chief Education
7 Officer for the City of Philadelphia.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 And so, Members, we are going
10 to have the two departments give their
11 overview of their testimony, and then
12 we'll go directly into questions.

13 Based upon a request from
14 members to have a level of input, this
15 round will be two minutes, so
16 everybody can get a chance to get
17 their questions and comments in. And
18 then we'll also going to go into our
19 second round. And so I just want to
20 state that, for the record.

21 So to the distinguished
22 panel, whoever wants to start first,
23 just say your name and please begin.

24 MS. HARLEY: Good afternoon,

1 Council President and members of City
2 Council. Thank you for having us this
3 afternoon. I am Vanessa Garrett
4 Harley, Chief Deputy Mayor for Social
5 Impact and Strategic Initiatives. And
6 the departments and agencies that are
7 coming before you this afternoon are
8 still under my portfolio, even though
9 I'm now in the Mayor's office.

10 I am joined today by my
11 leadership team. The two major
12 departments in the portfolio are the
13 Department of Human Services, and I'm
14 joined by Commissioner Kimberly Ali.
15 And the Mayor's Office of Education,
16 I'm joined by the Chief Education
17 Officer, Dr. Debora Carrera. But also
18 with me are Sean Perkins, who is the
19 director of -- or the Chief of the
20 Early Childhood Education, or our PHL
21 Pre-K Program, as some of you know it.

22 Dr. Christine Piven, who is
23 the Chief of Children and Family
24 Support. Many of you know that as the

1 Office of Children and Family
2 Prevention Services. And Nadine
3 Perese, who is the Chief Financial
4 Officer for both Office of Children
5 and Family and the Department of Human
6 Services.

7 Both the Mayor's Office of
8 Education and the Department of Human
9 Services have submitted written
10 testimony, for the record.

11 Early Childhood Education,
12 which encompasses our PHL Pre-K
13 Program and the Children and Family
14 Support Services, which houses out-of-
15 school time and our summer youth
16 employment or year round youth
17 employment now, career connected
18 learning program are found within the
19 DHS budget for budget detail purposes.

20 Before we answer, I'm sure,
21 the many questions that you may have,
22 I just wanted to share a few of the
23 highlights of our work on behalf of
24 the city's children and families.

1 The Department of Human
2 Services continues to make great
3 strides towards keeping children and
4 families at home and in their own
5 communities. For the first time ever,
6 the number of children in placement is
7 close to 2,500, down from
8 approximately 3,100 last year, and
9 from a high of approximately 6,100
10 back in 2016.

11 Almost half of the children
12 in placement live with their families.
13 We continue to offer an array of
14 diversion programs to keep families
15 out of both the child welfare and
16 juvenile justice system.

17 This year, the Mayor's Office
18 of Education in collaboration with the
19 School District of Philadelphia, local
20 charter schools and the Division of
21 Children and Family Support Services,
22 launched the Extended Day/Extended
23 Year program at 25 schools. That's 20
24 school district-operated schools and

1 five charter schools.

2 This program added over 7,000
3 new slots for after school, before
4 school and vacation enrichment type
5 activities. For the first time ever,
6 during winter and spring break,
7 students were able to engage in fun
8 and free activities so that their
9 parents could work.

10 In FY26, we plan to add an
11 additional 10 district schools and
12 another five charter schools. Our
13 early childhood high quality PHL Pre-K
14 Program is thriving. With a 92
15 percent enrollment rate, our 5,250
16 slots are placed throughout the city
17 at 227 locations.

18 This year, we launched a
19 unified preschool search and
20 enrollment platform by partnering with
21 the School District of Philadelphia
22 and the State Department of Early
23 Learning to launch a universal
24 enrollment process for parents to

1 choose a publicly funded Pre-K program
2 for their children.

3 This process will allow the
4 city to maximize its publicly funded
5 seats and avoid wait lists for some
6 programs while others are still
7 carrying empty seats. We also
8 invested \$3 million to recruit and
9 retain early childhood teachers for
10 our youngest learners.

11 Last summer, we launched the
12 city's new youth workforce program
13 called Career Connected Learning or
14 C2L. We are pleased to share that
15 almost 7,900 youth participated in
16 this program. Students in the program
17 earned a stipend while gaining
18 valuable work-based learning
19 experiences.

20 Applications for this year's
21 program will be launching in a few
22 short weeks. Additionally, we
23 continue to offer a robust out of
24 school time program across the city,

1 where over 7,000, participated last
2 summer, and over 8,000 youth
3 participated in the first half of the
4 school year.

5 My team and I are here today
6 to answer any specific questions that
7 you may have. Thank you very much for
8 all of your continued support.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

10 Well, thank you very much.

11 And so before we turn it over to
12 members so we can get right into the
13 questions. First and foremost, I just
14 want to acknowledge Commissioner of
15 DHS. She hails from that great part
16 of Philadelphia known as South Philly.
17 And so just always good to see
18 Ms. Kimberly Ali in terms of work that
19 you are doing and also part of
20 education team.

21 Debora, you have a very fine
22 young man that's working under your
23 leadership. He's worked in his field
24 for several years. He goes by the

1 name of Will Mega. And so I just want
2 to acknowledge him for his hard work
3 and his dedication because he truly
4 has a heart and most important passion
5 to help our youth.

6 And so I just want to
7 acknowledge you for your hard work and
8 your dedication as well as the team.
9 Vanessa, I already know that you're on
10 the case in terms of the work that you
11 have been doing, and so I look forward
12 to working with all of you.

13 I want to get into PHL Pre-K.
14 Very, very successful program. It's a
15 program that addresses the issue of
16 quality education for our most
17 precious assets here in the city of
18 Philadelphia. And that's our
19 children, right? And so I want to get
20 an idea of how many Pre-K slots are
21 funded for FY26 compared to FY25.

22 MS. HARLEY: So our Pre-K
23 slot funding is the same as it was for
24 FY25. Is 5,250 slots.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 Are we working to expand it?

3 And if not, why not?

4 MS. HARLEY: For this year,
5 we did not focus on expanding. We
6 wanted to double down on quality.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

8 Okay.

9 MS. HARLEY: And ensuring
10 that we have the appropriate quality
11 for the number of slots that we have
12 and the funding for that. You may
13 recall, Council President, I'm sure
14 some other members of council do, that
15 we asked for an increase last year
16 because the state increased the dollar
17 amount per slot that they were
18 charging from 10,000 to 10,500.

19 And so we asked for an
20 increase because we always try to
21 match what the state pays for slots so
22 that there is not that uneven level of
23 competition or forcing providers to
24 choose which program that they want to

1 be in. But we have been really
2 concentrating on the quality of the
3 slots.

4 I am pleased to say that the
5 vast majority, over 95 percent of our
6 programs, and I'll call up our chief
7 of prevention, Sean Perkins, who could
8 give you more specific details, but
9 over 95 percent of those programs are
10 what we call star three and four.

11 You know for -- that is the
12 rating system that the state uses to
13 determine quality programming. And so
14 we have been very intense about making
15 sure that we work with our providers
16 to ensure that while it is a free
17 Pre-K program for three and four years
18 old, that they are getting the highest
19 quality possible.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 And that was the follow-up
22 question I was going to ask in terms
23 of how many daycare centers or early
24 childhood development centers went

1 from, you know, two star to three star
2 to four star, but you answered that
3 question. When you talk about -- we
4 talk about the Department of Human
5 Services, when we talk about JJC,
6 right, Juvenile Justice Center, all of
7 my team here at some point in time
8 have visited the Juvenile Justice
9 Center.

10 Give us an idea of how we
11 have been addressing the issue of
12 overcrowdedness. I know there was a
13 crisis at one particular point in
14 time, and then there was a role that
15 the state had to play as well in terms
16 of expanding more beds.

17 And so give us an idea of
18 where we stand in terms of the status
19 of addressing the overcrowdedness and
20 also the hiring of individuals to help
21 with staffing capacity at JJC.

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Sounds
23 good.

24 Thank you for that question.

1 Again, I'm Kimberly Ali, I'm
2 commissioner for the Philadelphia
3 Department of Human Services. And so
4 as you indicated, Council President,
5 in 2022 and 2023 and part of 2024, we
6 were certainly in a crisis at the
7 PJJSC, given the number of young
8 people who were being housed there.

9 As a reminder, our state
10 license capacity is 184 young people.
11 When I testified last year, we were at
12 193 young people at the PJJSC. I am
13 happy to report today we are at 132.
14 We have been consistently below the
15 license capacity of 184 since June of
16 2024. So we continue our partnership
17 with the state in order for them to
18 promptly remove young people who have
19 been court ordered to be placed at
20 state institutions.

21 As of today, we have 20 young
22 people who are waiting for placement
23 at the state. Again, when we were
24 here last year, we were at 70.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 Fifty young people less.

3 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

5 Okay. What gets measured,
6 gets done. Congratulations. Keep up
7 the good work. So we have to like
8 also celebrate when we are doing what
9 works. So this is not just about
10 coming and just criticizing, but we
11 also want to -- well, we have to probe
12 and ask questions from accountability
13 standpoint, but let's celebrate our
14 wins. And so I think that's great.

15 And I also want to
16 acknowledge Michael Scott, I'm going
17 to ask him to stand up. He's over
18 there somewhere. Give him a round of
19 applause, please.

20 I just want to acknowledge
21 him because, you know, when you talk
22 about the issue of juvenile justice,
23 and I always talk about me being a
24 graduate from Penn, me being a

1 graduate from Mansfield, me studying
2 at Harvard, right?

3 But however, as a juvenile,
4 right, I had my challenges with the
5 system. My judge was named Reynolds
6 as a young man. I was on probation as
7 a young man, but it was some other
8 thought leaders and community leaders
9 who saw some things in myself that I
10 probably didn't see as a young man.

11 And so when you give us the
12 opportunity to bring outside partners
13 inside to the Juvenile Justice Center,
14 to kind of show these young men that
15 there life beyond just standing on the
16 block, there's life beyond just
17 carrying a gun.

18 I think I just built a brand-
19 new recording studio with Meek Mills,
20 the Muslim young brothers get to do
21 tiling services, so you let Imam come
22 in and talk to the young men. And so
23 I think those types of partnerships,
24 right, and also coupled with job

1 training and development
2 opportunities, when they do come back
3 out, I think that goes a long way for
4 us helping our young men now so they
5 don't arrive up in Phoenix, or they
6 don't -- they don't arrive up in Coal
7 Township because as a juvenile, right,
8 they didn't have that opportunity to
9 get their lives together.

10 And so I just commend the
11 team over there for the hard work that
12 they're doing.

13 With that being said, I know
14 my members are really looking forward
15 to asking questions. And so this
16 gentleman wasn't here for the last two
17 rounds, but I'm going to let him --
18 have him come start off with
19 Councilmember Curtis Jones, then
20 Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, then
21 Councilmember Brooks.

22 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank
23 you so much, Mr. President, and all
24 the work that the members of the body

1 helped to do. Whether it was Jamie,
2 us going to the Juvenile Justice
3 Center in your district, or whether it
4 was us suing the Commonwealth of
5 Pennsylvania for derelicting --
6 dereliction of duty. Working with you
7 to get that situation solved, I
8 applaud you as well.

9 Couple of quick questions,
10 though. As it relates to -- well,
11 first and foremost, I always told the
12 two of you, I could never do your job.
13 When I first met you, you meet people
14 on their worst day and have to help
15 them through it.

16 I want to thank you again for
17 the 100 shooter review. Where we
18 discovered through a lot of the data
19 that you had is that the young person
20 that you wind up taking into custody
21 or trying to assist early in their
22 life winds up often being the
23 defendant, please rise as an adult.
24 We see this throughout the system.

1 How much of your budget goes
2 for preservation of a family versus
3 taking into custody of a child? What
4 percentage does that represent?

5 COMMISSIONER ALI: While
6 Nadine, our CFO, is trying to get a
7 sense of the percentage, if you will.
8 I do have numbers in terms of the
9 funding -- the dollars that are spent,
10 to give you an idea.

11 And so when you look at the
12 Juvenile Justice Services budget, \$53
13 million of that budget goes to court
14 and community services. And so when
15 you talk about the diversionary
16 programs, everything from our IPS, our
17 intensive prevention services, to our
18 Community Evening Resource Centers, to
19 our evening resource centers, to our
20 citywide diversionary programs, to the
21 funding that we also provide for GVI
22 for juveniles that is encompassed
23 under the JJS budget.

24 When I look at the total

1 prevention spend, it's \$173 million.
2 That money also includes our child
3 welfare diversionary program. So all
4 of the services that keep families
5 together. So that includes our case
6 management services in the prevention
7 realm, meaning no formal acceptance
8 for child welfare services. So that's
9 our rapid service response, in which
10 during the course of an investigation,
11 a social worker walks alongside of the
12 family so that we can mitigate any
13 concerns that cause for a report to be
14 called in to the DHS system.

15 We also have family
16 empowerment centers, which is site-
17 based services. Congreso is one of
18 them, as well as Gemma. All of that
19 is included in the child welfare
20 diversionary.

21 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So to
22 what degree -- see, I knew that,
23 that's why I wanted to hurry.

24 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: To what
2 degree is any of this a pass-through
3 that might be threatened by No. In
4 Washington? How much is -- of that
5 budget is in jeopardy?

6 COMMISSIONER ALI: So our
7 overall federal budget, when you look
8 at DHS, that's a pass-through, is 17
9 percent, which is \$167 million. But
10 none of it is in direct jeopardy by
11 the federal government because the
12 federal government pays for core
13 mandated services. And so you -- that
14 is included our CUA contracts,
15 placement providers, and not
16 prevention and diversionary services.

17 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: And
18 I'll stop on this because we have an
19 aggressive schedule for questions.
20 The CUA system, how many do we have
21 now? How many are coming up for a
22 contract? And how do we keep place
23 with inflation so that we don't have
24 the extreme turnover in these ranks?

1 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. So
2 we actually have seven CUA providers
3 that oversee 10 geographic regions.
4 And so it's the same regions as we
5 always had in terms of the CUA
6 providers. In terms of the turnover,
7 we did put on the website our CUA 2024
8 score card. And if you look at the
9 workforce domain, we have certainly
10 done a much better job in terms of
11 maintaining staff, you know, at the
12 community umbrella agencies.

13 And so we are definitely
14 pleased by the CUA 2024 score card
15 versus the 2023 CUA score card. And
16 one of the big investments that we
17 made in terms of funding of our CUAs
18 is we wanted their salaries to be in
19 line with DHS salaries. And so the
20 average CUAs salary case manager is
21 \$60,000. That's comparable to our
22 social work service manager too at the
23 Department of Human Services.

24 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So I'll

1 wait for the second round. I want to
2 know about the placement in some of
3 the foster care situations. So
4 whoever has that information should
5 tee it up. Thank you, Mr. President.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 Thank you. Councilmember
8 Jamie Gauthier, then Councilmember
9 Brooks, then Majority Leader Gilmore-
10 Richardson.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

12 Thank you, Council President.
13 Good afternoon, Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: Good
15 afternoon.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I
17 want to add my applause on reducing
18 the census at PJJSC. I know it took a
19 lot of hard work. I want to get my
20 questions on record before you answer,
21 because we have a very short time
22 period.

23 So even though we did great
24 work reducing the census at PJJSC, we

1 also did see some really damning
2 reporting by the Inquirer earlier this
3 year, which found that Philadelphia
4 incarcerates youth at four times the
5 national average at a rate that is
6 higher than any other large city in
7 the nation. And that's true even when
8 you control for the type of crime that
9 we might be talking about.

10 And your budget detail states
11 that juvenile justice services will
12 advance the reach of its juvenile
13 alternative to detention initiative by
14 adding contracted community-based
15 alternatives and addressing
16 disproportionately within the juvenile
17 justice system. So I wanted to ask
18 some questions about that.

19 First, can you provide
20 additional detail on how exactly we
21 are addressing this
22 disproportionality? Specifically, how
23 are we working to increase pre and
24 post-arrest diversion options?

1 What are the community-based
2 alternatives that we are exploring at
3 this moment?

4 How many kids will these
5 efforts divert from the juvenile
6 justice system and does the proposed
7 budget amount meet our needs?

8 And then lastly, I am in
9 support of most methods of reducing
10 the number of kids at PJJSC, but I
11 remain firmly opposed to sending young
12 people to Rite of Passage in Texas.

13 So lastly, can you let us
14 know if we have any more young people
15 in Texas at this time, and are we
16 still contracting Rite of Passage for
17 future placements?

18 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you
19 for those questions. And I'll ask
20 Gary Williams, who is the Deputy
21 Commissioner of PJJSC, just to come up
22 in the event I need his assistance.

23 And so, yes. I am certainly
24 aware of the Inquirer article that

1 talked about the city of Philadelphia
2 incarcerating or detaining more young
3 people in terms of the other
4 commonwealth -- counties and the other
5 Commonwealth and in terms of the other
6 state. And I don't have an answer for
7 that.

8 The reason why I don't have
9 the answer for that is because DHS
10 does not make the decision in terms of
11 detaining young people.

12 As you know, that the arrest
13 of young people is done by the police.
14 The charging of young people is done
15 by the District Attorney's office.
16 The decision to detain a young person
17 is done by probation. So we view
18 ourselves at the PJJSC is ensuring
19 that we have a continuum of services
20 at the PJJSC to meet the needs of the
21 young people while they are placed
22 there.

23 We also view ourselves as the
24 provider or the entity, if you will,

1 that is responsible for providing a
2 continuum of services, both
3 diversionary as well as alternative to
4 detention, so that the young person is
5 not being held in detention. I talk
6 --

7 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

8 Yeah, I think that -- just to
9 briefly, I think DHS's role in
10 expanding community-based options and
11 alternatives has to be a key part of
12 this.

13 COMMISSIONER ALI:

14 Absolutely.

15 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

16 And so I'm asking you to
17 speak to that.

18 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

19 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

20 And what we're doing
21 proactively to change this dynamic.

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yep.

23 Absolutely. You want to talk
24 specifically about the programs?

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Good
2 afternoon, Councilwoman Gauthier.
3 Yep. good afternoon, counsel. Yeah.
4 My name's Gary Williams, Deputy
5 Commissioner for Juvenile Justice
6 Services.

7 So I want to speak a little
8 bit about what we are doing in terms
9 of specifically the JDAI initiative
10 which we actually brought on a full-
11 time coordinator. This coordinator
12 works in conjunction with DHS as well
13 as probation.

14 The idea of JDAI is really to
15 look at data to make informed
16 decisions about expanding alternative
17 to detention, as well as community-
18 based programming. And specifically,
19 we've actually opened a number of
20 additional community-based programs
21 that are focused on vocational skills
22 training, as well as job readiness.

23 Some examples of that,
24 Councilwoman, is one, we have a

1 YouthBuild program that we opened in
2 South Philadelphia. This is a program
3 that is based on vocational skills and
4 social emotional learning. This
5 particular program is open for young
6 people across the city.

7 It serves as a diversionary
8 program, and it serves young people
9 from 13 to 18. They actually are paid
10 a stipend to actually learn a trade.
11 Part of their culminating event in
12 terms of that program is actually
13 contributing to community development
14 by helping young -- helping citizens
15 fix up home -- fix up minor repairs to
16 their home. Very robust program.
17 We're excited about that. It opened
18 in fiscal year '24.

19 Another specific program that
20 is on that continuum is what we call
21 Philadelphia Technician Trade
22 Institute. It's a combination of a
23 intervention as well as diversionary.
24 We've entered into a contract with

1 this trade school. They actually have
2 opened and operate a, if you will, a
3 satellite campus right at the Juvenile
4 Justice Center -- Service Center,
5 whereby young people are exposed to
6 upwards to seven programs, bona fide
7 trade programs. Some include
8 carpentry, electrician, pipe fitting,
9 et cetera.

10 We really believe that giving
11 young people that level of exposure
12 could actually put them on a different
13 trajectory to actually change their
14 lives.

15 Not only are they actually
16 doing a satellite campus at the
17 center, they also have a Saturday
18 school whereby young people can
19 actually attend when they actually
20 discharge either from the center or
21 from treatment and rehabilitation.

22 So those are some examples of
23 extended programming that we actually
24 have invested in a significant way.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Is
2 it your sense that we're moving
3 forward with the community-based
4 options that we need to change this
5 dynamic? I don't think this is a
6 distinction we want to have
7 nationally.

8 MS. HARLEY: Could I just add
9 something to what Commissioner
10 Williams just told you, Councilwoman.
11 There are certain programs that are
12 court-ordered programs that we work
13 with the court on that are
14 specifically court-ordered to avert
15 detention.

16 For example, the Evening
17 Reporting Centers. There are four
18 different entities at four different
19 locations across the city where a
20 judge can actually order a young
21 person to attend there as opposed to
22 detaining them at the Juvenile Justice
23 Services Center.

24 There's something called --

1 there's also court-ordered intensive
2 supervision programming and/or in-home
3 detention program. So there are
4 specific programs where we work with
5 the court and the probation department
6 as an alternative to incarcerating
7 that young person, even though
8 sometimes they may have been
9 adjudicated, delinquent or determined
10 or have already had their trial.

11 But they're dependent upon
12 what the charges are, we do try very
13 hard to make sure we continue to have
14 a continuum of services so that not
15 every person has to be detained. We
16 really only want to detain those
17 people that is felt can only be
18 maintained safely there.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

20 Thank you very much. Next
21 Councilmember --

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Oh, Texas.
23 I'm sorry. Texas.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 Go ahead.

2 COMMISSIONER ALI: So I'm
3 happy to report that we do not have
4 any young people placed in Texas.
5 Yeah.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
7 I will say this though,
8 right? Because Texas is a little far,
9 but if you grew up in Philadelphia,
10 you know about Vision Quest, right?
11 If you grew up in Philadelphia, you
12 know about Wagon Train, right, with
13 Vision Quest where children would
14 travel all throughout certain parts of
15 the country via a wagon train. Like
16 it's literally a wagon train.

17 But I do want to get an idea,
18 and I'll wait until my round. And I
19 know there was a study that says that
20 children are more able to be
21 rehabilitated within their own
22 community, right, easier than being
23 like back in the day at Caldwell
24 Heights or Sleighton Farm.

1 And I'll follow-up on this
2 later, but you're also asking young
3 people to get their lives together in
4 an environment that if they don't have
5 a support system and all they know is
6 those streets, I would just love to
7 see how we combating that.

8 Because sometimes you come
9 out your environment, maybe not Texas,
10 but sometimes it's getting out of your
11 immediate circle to see something
12 differently, right? I'm speaking as
13 our Mayor says, from my own lived life
14 experience, right? I'm not a typical
15 elected official. Like been there,
16 done that.

17 But also when I saw a
18 Mansfield, I'm like, okay, there's
19 something a little different, right?
20 I'm not -- and it was a hard
21 transition because all I know is
22 everybody I grew up with. So when I
23 come back home even on the weekends
24 from school, I'm not ashamed to say I

1 would still get caught up sometime
2 because that's all I know, right? And
3 still coming from a pretty good
4 household, right?

5 And so we could have that
6 conversation later. Because I know
7 the data shows based upon one meeting
8 I had with y'all says in your home
9 neighborhood it's better to
10 rehabilitate easy than outside. But I
11 would want to know how we also showing
12 them something that's different than
13 what they only know.

14 Because some people never go
15 downtown. And we know what we just
16 experienced this past weekend, that is
17 youth. Hey, young folks, right? So
18 how do we broaden their horizon to see
19 other than what they only know. But I
20 want my members to really take
21 advantage of this time.

22 So with that being said,
23 Councilmember Brooks, then Majority
24 Leader Richardson, and then Member

1 Young.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

3 Thank you so much. I'm going
4 to kind of follow Jamie's lead. I'm
5 going to say all my questions, and
6 then you guys can answer later.

7 So my first group is for DHS.
8 A few years ago after the
9 investigations revealed that the city
10 routinely took millions of dollars
11 from youths in foster Care, this
12 council took action and passed a law
13 banning that practice.

14 Can you give us an update on
15 the implementation on this law and how
16 many accounts have been set up for
17 youth and what is the total amount of
18 money in these accounts?

19 And the second question is, a
20 part of this important law concerning
21 testing for benefits. Many of the
22 foster youth are eligible for various
23 benefits, including disability
24 benefits or survivor benefits from

1 other family members or previous
2 guardians. Is DHS testing all youth
3 for the benefits like disability? And
4 if you're not, why?

5 And the third is, DHS should
6 also be testing youth for all these
7 benefits as part of aging -- the aging
8 out process. So what -- I mean, so
9 that they can be set up for all the
10 programs and the money they're
11 entitled to when they leave DHS
12 programming.

13 Currently, what percentage of
14 youth are tested for benefits as part
15 of the aging out process? And can you
16 commit to making sure you guys are
17 doing that moving forward?

18 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you
19 for those questions. Nadine Perese
20 will answer the questions around
21 social security benefits.

22 MS. PERESE: Good afternoon.
23 My name's Nadine Perese, I'm the Chief
24 Financial Officer for the department.

1 And so the social security unit falls
2 in finance.

3 And so what we have done thus
4 far is internally we keep track of the
5 youth that are in our care and that
6 are receiving the social security
7 benefits. And then we become the rep
8 payee, as you're aware, while they're
9 in care because that's what we're
10 mandated to do through -- in order to
11 receive our federal funding through
12 the state. So that's a process that
13 we're unable to change.

14 So what we've done on the
15 side is in conversations with the Law
16 Department as well as OCYF at the
17 state level, our funder, we've
18 discussed matching the funds so that
19 we can conserve all of those accounts
20 for -- that money for youth on the
21 side without causing any issues with
22 our federal funding.

23 So we're still the rep payee,
24 but we're keeping track of that money

1 internally right now that we're
2 collecting for youth. So on a monthly
3 basis we're able to report out on what
4 we're collecting for youth in our
5 care.

6 What we're -- we haven't been
7 able to do so far, we've released an
8 RFP to try and find a provider to help
9 us with the accounting and the
10 conservation of these funds. That
11 really falls outside of the valley
12 wake of our department. We just don't
13 have the skill set or the bandwidth to
14 be able to manage that internally
15 within DHS. So we're trying to find a
16 consultant to help us -- to help take
17 care of that for us.

18 And in consultation with the
19 Law Department, we just had a failed
20 RFP process. So we couldn't find a
21 provider. So right now we are
22 reassessing internally. We're working
23 with the Finance Department and the
24 Law Department to try and rework the

1 scope of the RFP and try. And we
2 thought maybe that would be a better
3 way to get at a good accounting firm
4 that can help us and support us
5 through this process.

6 So that's where we are
7 internally with conserving the funds
8 for youth in our care.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So
10 basically just the funds are being
11 conserved. You're just trying to find
12 a better system to figure out --

13 MS. PERESE: Yeah.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: --
15 long term distribution?

16 MS. PERESE: Yeah. So we're
17 keeping track of -- yep. Huh-huh.
18 And the best way to do that -- and we
19 actually don't just want to disperse
20 the funds to youth. We want to
21 incorporate some sort of financial
22 literacy for the youth to make sure
23 that we're not just passing off large
24 chunks of money to youth after they

1 exit care and we can kind of support
2 them through that process.

3 So we're trying to make this
4 a holistic approach to this
5 programming, and so that's where we
6 are right now.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

8 Okay. What about the second
9 part of the question about testing for
10 benefits, whether it's eligibility or
11 disabilities while children are in
12 care? Do you have a system for that?

13 COMMISSIONER ALI: So yes.
14 Based on the needs of the young
15 people, we will ensure that that young
16 person receives an evaluation. And if
17 in fact that evaluation speaks to
18 whether or not that young person is
19 eligible for benefits, then we will
20 roll them in that process in terms of
21 conserving benefits as well.

22 Because as you know, in order
23 for young people to qualify for social
24 security benefits, they need to have

1 an evaluation to make that
2 determination. But I think it also is
3 important, probably, Nadine, for you
4 to talk about not the disability.
5 That we don't collect the disability.

6 MS. PERESE: That's correct.
7 So we are just -- so there's -- so we
8 don't do the social security income,
9 the SSI, we only collect the -- what's
10 known as RSDI. Yep. The Retirement
11 Survivor Benefits. Yes, that's
12 correct.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And
14 then I think the ending part is, what
15 about when children are at the age of
16 transition? If they come in close to
17 age of transition, is there a plan to
18 make sure they're transitioning into,
19 whether it's out of SSI service to
20 adult disability services, is there a
21 system for that to make sure that
22 they're -- they have a sustainable
23 income or the services that they need
24 once they transition out of the

1 system, even with the financial
2 literacy that you guys are moving
3 towards, as well as giving young
4 people lump sums of cash to run free
5 with?

6 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. And
7 I will also say that it is -- it's
8 expansive and not just for social
9 security. And so all young people who
10 age out of DHS, and when we say age
11 out, they did not achieve, you know,
12 they didn't reunify home, they weren't
13 adopted or they didn't achieve
14 permanent legal custodianship.

15 We track in terms of whether
16 or not they have a stable income and
17 help them with that, whether or not
18 they have stable housing, and also
19 whether or not they have a life
20 connection, someone that they are
21 connected to.

22 And so in terms of our
23 reporting on that, we had -- FY24, we
24 had 188 young people who aged out of

1 the Department of Human Services,
2 which was down from the 310 that we
3 had in FY 2021. Yes.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Now,
5 do the services still transition to
6 children that are in incarceration?
7 Like is it the same system for both or
8 is it a different process for children
9 that might be in JJ?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
11 Brief response, please. Because we
12 getting ready to move on.

13 COMMISSIONER ALI: Excuse me.
14 I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
16 I said, brief response and
17 then we're going to move on to the
18 next member.

19 COMMISSIONER ALI: So yes, we
20 do reintegration work with those young
21 people who transition out of the
22 Juvenile Justice Services Center.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Okay.
24 Thank you.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 All right. You're welcome.

3 The Chair recognize Majority Gilmore-
4 Richardson, then Member J. Young,
5 then member Jim Harrity, then Member
6 Bass.

7 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

8 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
9 Council President, and thank all of
10 you. And I know, Council President,
11 that you stated Commissioner Ali hails
12 from SP or South Philly, but she's
13 also a graduate of the Philadelphia
14 High School for Girls, which is why
15 she is so thorough. And wanted to add
16 -- and also Vanessa Garrett Harley
17 because that's what Girls High Girls
18 do. But at any rate, I wanted to just
19 --

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 Majority Leader Richardson,
22 there's a point of information from
23 your District Councilmember.

24 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: You

1 were giving out shout outs and you
2 didn't mention that Will Mega was from
3 West Philly.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

5 RICHARDSON: Oh, and Will Mega, yes.

6 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: There
7 you go.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
9 He's from Wynnefield.

10 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

11 RICHARDSON: From Wynnefield.

12 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: All
13 right.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

15 RICHARDSON: Wynnefield. Thank you.
16 I wanted to just say thank you to
17 Commissioner Ali for all of your work
18 with the Nonprofit Provider Task Force
19 and for being really a shiny example
20 of just the best -- one of the best
21 departments in the Health and Human
22 Service cluster.

23 Your department is an example
24 on how to do things the right way.

1 And we appreciate that example, and it
2 was exceedingly helpful for us in this
3 entire process. So I just wanted to
4 express my public thanks and gratitude
5 to you.

6 I only had one question for
7 DHS and the other for the Education
8 Department regarding the Extended
9 Day/Extended Year. You know, this
10 question that I'm going to ask, you
11 already sent me the information, but I
12 wanted to get it on the record because
13 I do want to be cognizant of our
14 colleagues in the Northeast,
15 Councilmember Driscoll and
16 Councilmember O'Neill, regarding the
17 Community Evening Resource Centers.

18 We have six centers across
19 the city and we're very appreciative
20 of your team. And Gary Williams is
21 here and Catherine and the whole DHS
22 team. They -- they're -- I'm telling
23 you, they're stellar. They're a shiny
24 example of how to do things right in

1 city government.

2 But we have the six centers
3 in and throughout the city. So we
4 have JJC in the Northwest, IDAAY
5 Central, Greater Philadelphia
6 Community Alliance in the South,
7 Community of Compassion which I love
8 in Southwest, and Xiente in East
9 Division, and then Unique Dreams is
10 technically covered for Northeast, but
11 their zip code is 19124.

12 And so I asked about the CERC
13 centers, one, because we want to
14 ensure that we have adequate coverage
15 in the upper part of the Northeast.
16 We don't have any footprint like up
17 top in the Northeast. And I know that
18 very frequently when we travel with
19 Councilmember Driscoll, and when we
20 travel with Councilmember O'Neill,
21 everyone in the Northeast says, don't
22 forget about the Northeast.

23 And so I just wanted to put
24 that on the record regarding a CERC

1 Center for the Northeast. And then
2 also the usage of the CERC Centers
3 citywide. And if we're continuing to
4 collaborate with PPD, because I do
5 notice that we have more young people
6 who are voluntarily --

7 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

9 RICHARDSON: -- going to the centers
10 versus PPD bringing young people to
11 the centers. And I know it's our
12 policy to, you know, try to reunite
13 the young person and help them reunite
14 with a parent or a guardian before we
15 take them to the CERC Centers. But I
16 just want to make sure that we're
17 adequately using CERC. And that'll be
18 a question I ask for your PPD as well.

19 And then I heard the bell, so
20 briefly, for Extended Day/Extended
21 Year, for the summer specifically,
22 will there be any programs that are
23 focused just on reading?

24 I will tell you that I love

1 the program. Some of the providers
2 that we have in the system now are
3 providers that I used as a child where
4 my parents place me, I should say, as
5 a child. And they have done great
6 work for many years. But we do need
7 programs that focus on reading for our
8 young people because a number of our
9 young people are not reading on grade
10 level and we need reading specific
11 programs.

12 You know, they have to have
13 the recreation components and the
14 other parts for out of school time,
15 but we need programs that are focused
16 on reading for our young people so
17 they don't experience summer slide.
18 And that would be in conjunction with
19 the work that the district does. But
20 because you all pick those providers,
21 we need to have a focus on reading.
22 So I wanted to put those on the
23 record.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 And also a good point of
2 information, Ms. Debora Carrera, can
3 you also just in the same vein, just
4 also touch on what are we doing to
5 address adult literacy?

6 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

7 RICHARDSON: Right.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 And see if -- I think of
10 something like 18 percent adults are
11 like illiterate. And so that would be
12 great segue into those two parts.

13 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah. So
14 I'll start with the CERC data for the
15 Community Evening Resource Centers.
16 And so for FY24, so that was July of
17 '23 until June of '24, we had 1,378
18 young people who visited the CERCs
19 25,000 times. And so that is an
20 indication that they love the CERCs.
21 The CERCs are a safe space for young
22 people between the hours of 7:00 p.m.
23 and 2:00 a.m.

24 And then when you look at the

1 FY25 data from July of 24 until now,
2 it was 1099 young people and they made
3 over 18,000 visits to the CERCs. And
4 since exception, since January of
5 2022, we service 2,614 young people
6 for 50,000 visits to the Community
7 Evening Resource Centers.

8 And so they are much needed
9 in our community. We will continue to
10 work with the police department to
11 ensure that they know that it is a
12 resource for young people who are out
13 past curfew violations.

14 We do have one provider in
15 particular at JJC, who does a much
16 better job in terms of their
17 interaction with the police. They
18 highly utilize the CERC in Northwest
19 at JJC. And so we will continue in
20 that vein.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

22 RICHARDSON: Mr. President, can I --

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 Can I put a pin in that just

1 real fast?

2 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

3 RICHARDSON: Sure. Yeah.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

5 And so as a new leader -- as
6 a new elected official Councilmember,
7 and she said, listen, John Street
8 created this model where we went
9 inside neighborhoods and they were
10 called curfew centers. And I want to
11 create that same model 2.0. Right?

12 And so we talked and she
13 said, listen, this is the game plan.
14 So I just want to say kudos to
15 Majority Leader Richardson because
16 this is actually government in action.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

18 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

20 And so when you see how she
21 built on it from like maybe one to two
22 centers, and then the next year,
23 three, four centers, and then you see
24 the actual numbers and trying to

1 impact our young people, I just want
2 to take a moment to just acknowledge
3 that in terms of the work you're
4 doing. Member Richardson?

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. President.
7 And those are my exact remarks. I
8 just really want to say thank you
9 because this is like a dream come true
10 in government in action. And the
11 reason why we're sent here to
12 represent our community and our
13 neighbors to service over 50,000 young
14 people in the short amount of time
15 that we all work together to stand up
16 the centers is nothing but remarkable.
17 And I'm just so appreciative of the
18 DHS team because you all did such a
19 stellar job.

20 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

22 RICHARDSON: And, you know, just
23 working together for us to stand this
24 up. So thank you, thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you.

2 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

3 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

4 MS. CARRERA: Thank you.

5 My name is Dr. Debora

6 Carrera, the Chief Education Officer

7 for the Mayor's Office of Education.

8 So thank you for your

9 question, Councilwoman. I'm excited

10 to report that we will be extending

11 Summer Achievers in all of the

12 Extended Day/Extended Year programs.

13 So Summer Achievers is a

14 collaboration that existed between the

15 Office of Children and Families and

16 the School District of Philadelphia,

17 where to your exact point, in the

18 morning students receive academic

19 support in literacy and in

20 mathematics. And then they're working

21 with the providers in the afternoon.

22 So we're excited that now

23 Summer Achievers will also be expanded

24 to the 20 Extended Day/Extended Year

1 district operated schools. And we're
2 going to have some programming --
3 summer programming in some of the
4 charter schools as well.

5 And then, Council President,
6 to your question, that is correct.
7 And so our office, the Mayor's Office
8 of Education, we work with learners of
9 all ages. And to the Mayor's vision
10 statement of economic opportunity for
11 all, adult education is really
12 important because there are about 16
13 percent of Philadelphians ages 25 or
14 older who do lack a high school
15 diploma or it's equivalent. And so
16 that's something for us to really
17 think about.

18 And our office is working to
19 make sure that we address those needs
20 and those issues. And so in this
21 fiscal year, year to date, we've had
22 2,203 learners enrolled in classes,
23 which is exciting. And we have about
24 82 classes running simultaneously

1 throughout the city.

2 And these are classes that
3 are offering basic literacy skills,
4 numeral skills, as well as acquisition
5 of the English language.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 Okay. Thank you very much.

8 The Chair recognizes Member Jeffrey J.
9 Young, Member Harrity next, and then
10 Councilmember Cindy Bass.

11 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
12 you, Mr. President. Just a couple
13 questions for -- regarding DHS. Is
14 there a funding discrepancy between
15 kinship care and foster care? And if
16 so, can you provide us with the
17 rationale behind that?

18 COMMISSIONER ALI: No, there
19 isn't.

20 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Okay.
21 Great.

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: We pay
23 foster parents the same amount of
24 money as we do kinship caregivers. So

1 there is no funding discrepancy.

2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG:

3 Great. Thank you for that.

4 And can you tell us what, if you keep
5 the data on the number of young people
6 who are involved in the DHS system who
7 have either become victims of gun
8 violence or perpetrators of gun
9 violence?

10 COMMISSIONER ALI: I don't
11 have that information readily
12 available, but I'm sure I can get it.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
14 you. And there was a -- there was
15 talk about a bunch of programs that
16 the city has for these young people to
17 get involved in, which is great. But,
18 you know, there was no specific
19 information on the capacity for these
20 programs.

21 So can you tell us, I mean,
22 there's a number of programs that the
23 gentleman mentioned about, you know,
24 getting children exposed to the trades

1 and paying them weekly stipends. But
2 can you talk to us about the capacity
3 because if these programs are working,
4 then we will want to know how to
5 expand these programs so more kids can
6 have these opportunities as well.

7 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes, we
8 can get the information. Just give me
9 one second because I have it. Just
10 don't know where in this binder.

11 MS. HARLEY: And,
12 Councilmember, while Commissioner Ali
13 is trying to find the actual data, I
14 just want to point out -- first, thank
15 you for the question because I think
16 it's an important question. It's a
17 relevant question about capacity.

18 But one of the things that we
19 do is continue to review and be
20 willing to increase capacity. Because
21 we try to determine what we scale up
22 on. It's very rare that we get a
23 program that is at full capacity that
24 we will not go back and look at and

1 try to add additional funding based on
2 the ability.

3 So it is very, very rare that
4 I hear that our programs are totally
5 full because the objective is not to
6 turn a kid away, particularly if they
7 can fit into one of those programs.
8 But I'm sure they -- they're looking
9 to give you the exact detail now. And
10 if we can't find it at this moment, we
11 can always get you the actual data
12 back.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
14 you.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. If I
16 may, Councilman Young. Again, Gary
17 Williams, Deputy Commissioner for
18 Juvenile Justice Services. We will
19 get that information to you.

20 But I do want to -- I want to
21 make mention of the one program that I
22 did mention, PTTI, Philadelphia
23 Technician Trade Institute. They
24 actually started their work with our

1 young people in March of last year.
2 To date, they actually served 131
3 young people. Out of that 131, 89
4 completed the program and 28 was
5 actually -- went on to actually have
6 either part-time or full-time
7 employment. It's just one example.
8 And it's still a relatively newer
9 program.

10 When we talk about capacity
11 with regard to intensive prevention
12 services, which is a combination of
13 case management and diversionary
14 program, which is a highlight in terms
15 of school diversion, as well as it is
16 the major intervention that we have
17 with the Citywide diversion and our
18 partnership with Philadelphia Police
19 Department. They're servicing at
20 least a thousand young people every
21 year. Just to give you an example.

22 But we can certainly drill
23 that down a little further for you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank

1 you. And just one brief question.
2 Council President mentioned something
3 about the environment for the kids.
4 And I went to a boarding school where
5 on the weekends my life was totally
6 different than it was Monday through
7 Friday. Because when I went home, it
8 was -- it was literally night and day.

9 So has the city ever explored
10 opportunities to open up boarding
11 facilities since we had the closures
12 of Sleighton Farms and closure of Glen
13 Mills and all these things?

14 Have we looked at
15 opportunities to expand on some of the
16 short falls that we saw with some of
17 those type of entities to try to
18 change these environments to make it a
19 little bit better for our kids to
20 really get a different outlook on
21 life?

22 Because they're -- I mean,
23 they got the ankle bracelets now and
24 that's like a badge to them walking

1 around their communities, right?

2 So what can we do to really
3 get them out of that mind set? And
4 has the city really explored that
5 opportunity to fill that gap, because
6 it's -- instead of sending our kids to
7 Texas, you know, we can purchase
8 somewhere to really build on that
9 capacity that we -- that we need.

10 COMMISSIONER ALI: We have
11 not, in terms of when you talk about
12 the child welfare and the juvenile
13 justice system, have not explored
14 boarding homes, if you will.

15 We actually had to sort of
16 change that narrative to make sure in
17 terms of child welfare operations,
18 that young people who are in care are
19 in care because we can't keep them
20 safe, you know, in their particular
21 homes. So we have not explored that.

22 What we have done as an
23 alternative is offer at least those
24 safe spaces for young people. And so,

1 as you know, our safe spaces are
2 actually open on the weekends as well.
3 And so they're just not Monday through
4 Friday programs. So when we talk
5 about the CERCs, when we talk about
6 the evening reporting centers, when we
7 talk about intensive prevention
8 services, which is also site-based and
9 case management, we do provide those
10 services on the weekend, as well as --
11 opposed to just a Monday through
12 Friday program.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -
14 RICHARDSON: Hold on. Okay. Thank
15 you. Thank you very much,
16 Councilmember Young. The Chair now
17 recognizes Councilmember Harrity.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
19 Thank you, Leader. Thank
20 you. Just a little note on that. I
21 agree with Councilman Young. If
22 something has worked, we should figure
23 out how to expand on that.

24 As the Council President

1 said, someone whose lived experience
2 brought them through the juvenile
3 justice system. I believe that the
4 programs that you're talking about,
5 the trade programs and stuff like
6 that. If we had more of that before
7 they reached you guys, we'd win a lot
8 more, you know.

9 So definitely would like to
10 know what programs are working so that
11 we could try to expand them. Because
12 we all know those of us who grew up in
13 a neighborhood, everything operates
14 around your corner or your little
15 hangout where you're at.

16 And, you know, sometimes,
17 like, with programs like these, it may
18 be easier for somebody to complete and
19 go with it if maybe they could bring a
20 friend. You know what I'm saying?
21 Like a buddy program sort of thing
22 where they can bring somebody else
23 along with them to learn that trade
24 with them, you know, because, you

1 know, we're used to being around
2 people. We're social people. And,
3 you know, our corner and when we're
4 young, our friends are our life.
5 That's it. You know what I mean?

6 So we need to expand those
7 programs that are working and giving
8 these kids training, because the
9 bottom line is not all of us are meant
10 for college. I wasn't. You know what
11 I mean? So we got to give them
12 opportunities earlier and teach them
13 earlier so that they can actually have
14 a trade or have something that they're
15 able to do.

16 When I went to Bartram, a lot
17 of my buddies were in the automotive
18 program and, you know, now they're all
19 in their own shops or mechanics, but
20 they learned that in high school and
21 it stuck with them their whole lives.

22 But my questions today is for
23 the Mayor's Office of Education. How
24 will the 43 positions being moved to

1 the Mayor's Office of Education or MOE
2 impact DHS operations and vice versa?
3 And what is the reasoning behind this
4 move? And are there specific programs
5 that this aims to contribute to? I'm
6 just trying to get a grip on this.

7 MS. HARLEY: So
8 Councilmember, thank you for the
9 question. I'll start off and then
10 I'll pass it over to Chief Carrera.
11 But the positions that you're
12 referring to are being moved actually
13 equate to the moving up programs as we
14 looked at and tried to better align
15 where services were. Some of those
16 positions, for example, are in the
17 Adult Education Department.

18 And so, now that we have a
19 Mayor's Office of Education, they're
20 better aligned in that department with
21 those folks with the expertise around
22 overseeing those type of programs
23 could be.

24 Community schools is where

1 the bulk of those positions that you
2 just described, the 43, I'm trying to
3 remember, because all of this stuff
4 was under me. I think it was
5 30-something of the positions where
6 actually our community schools, again,
7 better aligned under the Mayor's
8 Office of Education because the
9 community schools program is about a
10 comprehensive program that is a direct
11 partnership with the School District
12 of Philadelphia and the Office of
13 Children and Families and now Mayor's
14 Office of Education.

15 So it was about aligning
16 those programs that directly went to
17 education better there. So they will
18 not hurt DHS if that was the question,
19 how will it affect DHS? They will
20 not.

21 They were programs kind of
22 more in the provisional realms and
23 particularly because all of this stuff
24 is still coming under the same

1 portfolio, right, because it's still
2 under my portfolio, both with DHS and
3 with Mayor's Office of Education. I'm
4 able to make sure that the interaction
5 is appropriate and they work very
6 collaboratively together on many of
7 these programs.

8 And DHS, you will find in
9 your budget line is still paying for
10 some of the services, for example, the
11 case management services at the
12 community school because you want to
13 make sure that those services stay in
14 place. So they work together well.

15 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

16 That's great. Thank you.
17 And then just real quick, how is the
18 extended hours going to affect the --

19 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

20 RICHARDSON: Councilmember Harrity?

21 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Yeah.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

23 RICHARDSON: I apologize for the
24 interruption. If you could just wrap

1 up with this question because we are
2 way past time.

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

4 Yes. And they can give it to
5 me and, you know, if you want, just
6 relay it or whatever. This is just --
7 how are we going to deal with the
8 maintenance of the facilities that we
9 usually do in the summertime in the
10 schools where they're going to be
11 going year round now? That was all.

12 MS. CARRERA: Thank you
13 again. Dr. Debora Carrera, Chief
14 Education Officer. Thank you,
15 Councilman, Harrity.

16 So we've -- we're seeing
17 success. We work very collaboratively
18 with The School District of
19 Philadelphia. And as I shared in this
20 pilot year, 20 schools were selected
21 and we did work carefully with the
22 district to make sure that we were
23 also selecting schools where the
24 facilities were at the center of that

1 decision as well.

2 So school buildings that
3 could handle children there in the
4 summer, children there in the winter,
5 in the spring. So those are some of
6 those same indicators that we're going
7 to use.

8 But we work very closely with
9 Deputy Superintendent Oz Hill and his
10 team to make sure that as we are
11 expanding and hopefully expanding the
12 program, that we will be working in
13 facilities that can hold the
14 programming year-round.

15 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Thank
16 you.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
18 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
19 very much. The chair now recognizes
20 Councilmember Bass.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
22 you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon.

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: Good
24 afternoon.

1 MS. HARLEY: Good afternoon.

2 MS. CARRERA: Good afternoon.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: How's
4 everybody doing?

5 MS. HARLEY: Good.

6 COMMISSIONER ALI: Good.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So I
8 have a couple of questions. So I want
9 to just ask first, and I know we're
10 short on time, so I'll try to go as
11 quickly as possible, but I have a lot
12 of questions.

13 So the first is that I
14 noticed that, you know, I was paying
15 attention to the CUA score card, and
16 it's something when I was the Chair of
17 Health and Human Services that, you
18 know, we talked about extensively.
19 You know, I'm no longer the Chair, but
20 I'm still very interested in that
21 system because I don't understand how
22 the city, you know, when we first
23 implemented this, it's never made
24 sense to me. That we think that we

1 can pay less and get more for a
2 vulnerable population.

3 And, you know, the idea was
4 really like a cost cutting measure and
5 it didn't end up, you know, saving any
6 money. We didn't cut any cost. We
7 actually expanded costs. You know,
8 probably, like, doubled our costs.
9 And still not getting the results like
10 the -- I don't know, the -- because we
11 are getting some good results, but
12 we're not getting the level of, you
13 know, acceptable results that I think
14 any one of us would want.

15 And so I just wanted to ask a
16 couple of questions about the CUAs and
17 specifically the score card. And that
18 was in 2024. We asked about the score
19 card because it hadn't come out yet.
20 And this was, you know, a year ago.
21 And we were told, oh, it's coming out,
22 and then it just came out, like, three
23 weeks ago. Is there any reason why we
24 didn't publish a score card -- a CUA

1 score card in 2024?

2 COMMISSIONER ALI: So

3 actually it was the 2023 that wasn't

4 posted. And so the CUA score card was

5 posted for 2023, and then it also was

6 posted for 2024. And so, because it

7 is -- it looks at the entire year, so

8 the entire fiscal year, right now, the

9 data has to settle for fiscal year

10 2025, since we are not quite done,

11 fiscal year 2025. And so it's always

12 a year behind.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: And do you

15 want me to speak to -- in terms of the

16 narrative around it being less?

17 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Well,

18 not yet, because I do want to --

19 COMMISSIONER ALI: Okay.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BASS:

21 Because I know we're short on

22 time. Madam Chair, do I have -- are

23 there folks lined up in the queue?

24 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

1 RICHARDSON: Yes, but you can ask your
2 last question.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

5 RICHARDSON: Councilmember Bass.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: The last
7 one.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

9 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: okay.

11 So let me ask this. When it comes to
12 reviewing a score card, one of the
13 things that I've always taken
14 exception with, and I think Kimberly
15 and Madam Commissioner, we've spoken
16 about this extensively. And that is
17 the fact that the Liberty Bell rating,
18 in my opinion, should actually be a
19 grade.

20 And if you were to grade
21 them, then we have, you know, like, a
22 traditional A, B, C, so that people
23 can really, you know, get it right off
24 -- right off the top.

1 And so if you grade it as
2 it's -- as the numbers are provided,
3 so 3 of the 10 CUA agencies right now
4 would be C's. And I don't think a C
5 is acceptable when you're dealing with
6 a vulnerable population.

7 And so, in 2020, 2 out of the
8 10 were C's. And 2021, 1 out of the
9 10 was a C. And 2022, 5 out of 10
10 were C's. And in 2023, 4 out of 10
11 are C's. So 40 percent, 50 percent,
12 however, you know, how you want to
13 look at it.

14 And what's interesting is
15 that of those numbers, for three of
16 those four years, those C's include
17 one consistent provider.

18 And so my question is, is
19 there a -- there should be a floor
20 that says for any of these providers,
21 if you're providing -- if you're not
22 making this mark, if you're not an
23 A-agency or a B-agency, you cannot be
24 a C-agency in dealing with this

1 population.

2 And so, can there be a floor
3 that DHS would mandate so that there
4 would be no less than four bells or,
5 you know, a B-grade? And is that
6 something that you-all would be
7 willing to do? And is there an
8 improvement plan for any of these
9 agencies that consistently come up?

10 Because there's one,
11 Bethanna, which consistently every
12 single year is a low -- low ranking
13 provider of services to the vulnerable
14 populations. And so how long do they
15 get to be?

16 And I -- you know, I don't --
17 I don't have anything personal about
18 -- against anybody here, but how long
19 do you get to be in this position and
20 deal with this vulnerable population
21 and not make -- you know, not make the
22 grade, not make the cut?

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah.

24 And so thank you for that

1 question. And how I would respond is
2 that we agree that children, youth and
3 families need quality services, which
4 is why we transparently do a CUA score
5 card and we actually post it on the
6 DHS website so that everyone can see
7 how the CUAs are doing.

8 And I would say the reason
9 why -- really, the reason why we
10 decided to do the bells really has to
11 do with the fact that we are
12 Philadelphia. But I do hear you in
13 reference to that. And yes, when we
14 have a provider who is a C or below,
15 we certainly meet with the provider
16 very regularly.

17 When I mean, "me," my DHS
18 leadership team, I have a performance
19 management and technology department
20 who oversees their plan of correction.
21 And so, yes, they submit plan of
22 corrections, but the other thing that
23 they do is that we bring in the CUA
24 leadership supervisory and above, so

1 that they can learn from the other
2 CUAs in terms of what are you doing
3 well, what processes, what practices
4 do you put -- did you put in place so
5 that you can improve your score?

6 You did reference Bethanna.
7 You know, at one time Bethanna was at
8 a bell 2, and so they have made some
9 substantial progress in terms of their
10 service delivery. But --

11 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So they
12 went from a D to a C.

13 COMMISSIONER ALI: They went
14 from a D to a C on the --

15 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: That's
16 still not --

17 COMMISSIONER ALI: I get it.
18 I get it. I hear you, you know, in
19 terms of the young people and rest
20 assure that we continue to monitor
21 that.

22 Our CUA score card is the
23 most robust evaluation that we do at
24 the department. We actually review

1 over 2,000 cases that consists to
2 close to 4,000 children, you know, in
3 terms of their service delivery.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: But --
8 well, let me get -- if I could just
9 wrap up?

10 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

11 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Just say
13 -- just say this and I'll come back on
14 a second round.

15 So assume, you know, as you
16 said, you have all the different, you
17 know, resources that you bring to the
18 table to CUAs that are struggling.
19 But clearly in this case we have one
20 that, you know, continues to struggle
21 year in and year out. For three of
22 the last four years, they're making
23 what I would say is an unacceptable
24 grade.

1 And so, like, it doesn't feel
2 like we have any, you know, like, is
3 there a plan B? Can another CUA come
4 in and sort of take over their case
5 load that's performing better?

6 You know, like somebody who's
7 maybe a higher-ranking CUA could sort
8 of provide some mentorship to a lower
9 ranking CUA? Because, you know, it's
10 -- this isn't -- it doesn't seem like
11 there's a plan to lift them out of
12 this situation because, you know, the
13 numbers speak for themselves.

14 I'll -- you can answer that
15 later, but I would like for you to
16 address what you said you would
17 address earlier around -- oh, I forgot
18 it. What did you say you wanted to
19 talk about?

20 COMMISSIONER ALI: Me?

21 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yeah.

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: What --

23 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I'm

24 sorry, I can't remember.

1 COMMISSIONER ALI: What did

2 --

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: No, I
4 can't -- I'm sorry. You -- I'm sorry.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Issuing
6 the results.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: The
8 results, yes.

9 COMMISSIONER ALI: The
10 results of what?

11 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Right.
12 Issuing the results timely. You said
13 that you were --

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: Oh, yeah.
15 So it's always a year -- it's always a
16 year behind. And so now what we're
17 doing since fiscal year '25 is not
18 over yet. So usually it takes us
19 about -- we usually -- we'll post it
20 somewhere around January, February-
21 ish. You know, really depending on
22 the needs of the department.

23 I do want to remind you in
24 terms of the CUA score card is that

1 when you asked about the -- you know,
2 the RFP process, we did RFP, you know,
3 some CUAs. And so some of these CUAs
4 who are doing well is actually their
5 first go-around, you know, in terms of
6 their score card.

7 And, yeah, so we will post
8 FY25 somewhere around February, but
9 it's usually a year-round. However,
10 we do do quarterly reviews. And so in
11 order to roll up into the annual score
12 card, we do quarterly reviews. You
13 talked about the mentorship, and so
14 that's what I was talking about in
15 terms of bringing the CUA leadership
16 together because you do have higher
17 performing CUAs who mentor CUAs on
18 certain benchmarks if they're not
19 doing well.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

22 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I'll

24 come back on the next round.

1 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

2 RICHARDSON: Yes.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

6 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Because we
7 have quite a few in the queue and we
8 have an evening budget town hall
9 tonight, so I want to try to get to
10 everybody else that's in the queue.

11 We have -- the Chair now
12 recognizes Councilmember Ahmad.

13 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
14 you, Madam Chair. I actually am going
15 to continue in the line that my
16 colleague was questioning around CUAs.
17 To first, help me just refresh my
18 memory as to the funding of the CUAs.
19 Where is that reflected in your
20 budget?

21 MS. PERESE: Sure. Thank you
22 for that question. So across the 10
23 CUA regions, we spend --

24 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

1 RICHARDSON: Can please state your
2 name, for the record?

3 MS. PERESE: Oh, I'm sorry.
4 Thank you. My name's Nadine Perese,
5 I'm the chief financial officer for
6 the department.

7 Across the 10 CUAs, it's \$114
8 million that we're investing annually.
9 That's for the fiscal year in the
10 budget. And are you asking the --
11 what the funding makeup is?

12 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Is it
13 -- is it in the Class 200?

14 MS. PERESE: Yes. Class 200.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Class
16 200. Okay. So this is completely
17 within your purview, not CBH? This is
18 completely --

19 MS. PERESE: That's correct.

20 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: --
21 within DHS?

22 MS. PERESE: That's correct.
23 Uh-huh.

24 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So my

1 question is, when you went to the CUA
2 system, did the staffing for your
3 department change because a lot of the
4 services were now going to be handled
5 by CUA?

6 MS. HARLEY: Councilwoman,
7 I'm just going to try to lead off, and
8 then I'll turn it over to Commissioner
9 Ali because when we went to the CUA
10 system, I was in a leadership position
11 at DHS, and then ultimately was the
12 one charged with having to stand up
13 the last few CUAs.

14 The staffing levels did not
15 change at DHS because we did not want
16 to go into laying off any staff.

17 There are other jurisdictions
18 who did models that are similar to our
19 Community Umbrella Agency model, which
20 was a model that was all about putting
21 the services in the community where
22 they could be more easily availed and
23 hopefully would be utilized more
24 frequently, making things more

1 convenient, right? So that was a lot
2 of it, but we did not lay off any
3 staff. So, the staffing levels at DHS
4 did not change.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So did
6 they get allocated to different work
7 or oversight of CUAs?

8 MS. HARLEY: Yes, they got
9 allocated to different work. The
10 service array was slightly different.
11 It was enhanced. We kept the front
12 line services at DHS, which would be
13 our DHS hotline and investigations,
14 and where a large part of your staff
15 is at is still there. DHS is still
16 responsible for that. And so those
17 workers remained in those fields.

18 The workers that would've
19 been what we used to call the backend
20 or the ones doing more of the case
21 management, that's what got moved to
22 the CUA, was the case management
23 services. But those existing workers
24 at DHS went into other roles. And the

1 commissioner can give you more details
2 around that.

3 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah.

4 Primarily, the staff at DHS, they went
5 into family team conferencing roles.
6 And so we have a supervisor as well as
7 a social worker who engages family so
8 that they can assist with developing
9 their own case plan so that they can
10 reunify with their children or their
11 case can be closed if they were
12 receiving in-home services.

13 We also put additional staff
14 in our performance management and
15 technology division, you know, in
16 terms of monitoring and evaluation,
17 you know, as well to ensure that the
18 CUAs were providing services to
19 families as mandated.

20 And then we also beefed up
21 our -- or put additional staff, if you
22 will, in our front end. So on our
23 hotline, as well as an intake in
24 investigations, so that we could make

1 sure that we were responding to calls
2 that we wanted to enhance our
3 expertise around doing investigations.
4 And so we put additional staff there.

5 And then finally practice
6 coaches. So we had practice coaches,
7 as well as senior learning specialists
8 who are co-located at the CUAs to
9 ensure that there was a transfer of
10 learning in terms of the practice.

11 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So
12 that's exactly what I wanted to hear.
13 Because to my colleague's point of
14 improving CUA performance, you already
15 have a system in place to assist and
16 support.

17 And I wanted to know how well
18 that's been working in terms of
19 elevating the services to be received
20 from CUAs? It seems like there could
21 be some improvement in that area of
22 getting CUAs to really be leveled up
23 to get better scores.

24 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. And

1 so as I indicated, we are -- we
2 certainly monitor and evaluate them
3 through DHS's performance management
4 and technology and the staff that are
5 co-located at the CUAs, primarily the
6 CUAs that are not doing as well,
7 because we do have CUAs that have five
8 bell, and then we have some that have
9 four bells, you know, as well that we
10 have them co-located at the CUAs to do
11 the transfer of learning.

12 In addition, my supervisory
13 team under the direction of the Deputy
14 Commissioner Sam Harrison and Child
15 Welfare Operation, as well as his
16 operations directors, also meet
17 monthly with CUA staff from
18 supervisory above up to the CUA
19 directors, again for their transfer of
20 learning so that they can continue to
21 learn from the Department of Human
22 Services.

23 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So they
24 get a lot of good support from you.

1 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

2 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So

3 hopefully in our next report card we
4 will see a reflection of that.

5 Just quickly, I know we are
6 short of time. I just want to turn to
7 page 17, which again, has a sample of
8 some of your contracts, professional
9 contracts.

10 Are any of these CUA
11 contracts or -- I can't tell what
12 exactly staff augmentation -- those
13 are IT things. Is there any CUA
14 contracts in there or not?

15 MS. PERESE: No. These are
16 not CUA contracts. These are our top
17 five contracts, the largest contracts
18 that we have that are for profits.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And so,
20 in that -- when I look at the time
21 from an RFP to the contract start
22 date, who controls that time? Because
23 I see seven months, 10 months, 11
24 months, 11 months from issuance of an

1 RFP. Who controls the time of the
2 contract start?

3 MS. PERESE: Sure. So the
4 contract start period -- the
5 department controls the contract start
6 --

7 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: DHS
8 does.

9 MS. PERESE: Yes. Uh-huh.
10 That's correct.

11 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So can
12 you say why it takes so long?
13 Because, you know, we would like
14 things to move much faster.

15 MS. PERESE: Sure. So these
16 are predetermined time periods. So
17 oftentimes we'll go through the
18 conformance -- the -- I'm sorry.
19 Excuse me. The RFP process. And even
20 though it ends, the plan is to not
21 start work until a certain point in
22 time.

23 So for instance, with the
24 first one, the Shine Early Learning

1 for the quality supports for our PHL
2 Pre-K, we needed that to start in
3 July. So our goal is to start as
4 early as possible, and there can be a
5 lag time between the award, like, when
6 we have decided and selected a
7 contractor to the actual start date of
8 the work.

9 But, you know, the
10 conformance time -- I mean, the RFP
11 time can vary. I think it kind of
12 depends on the nature of the contract
13 as well. If we have to build in a
14 time period for presentations, a
15 longer Q&A process, so it is a little
16 bit tailored based on the work as
17 well.

18 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: It
19 would be good as a city to be more
20 efficient about this process in
21 general.

22 MS. PERESE: Understood.

23 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So
24 that's just a point. But very quickly

1 last wrap up, is -- do -- can you
2 share or send to us what is the CUA
3 process of evaluation that you use to
4 award these contracts? I would like
5 to see what that looks like. And I
6 mean, we don't have to do it now. I
7 just want -- because this is a quality
8 assessment issue that I'm concerned
9 about. So if you could please send it
10 to Council President for us to see.

11 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes, we
12 can.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

14 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
16 you, Madam Chair.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

18 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Councilmember
19 Ahmad.

20 So Councilmember Landau,
21 you'll be the last Councilmember for
22 round one.

23 We will then move to a very
24 quick lightning round two where each

1 of the four members who are in the
2 queue will have 90 seconds to put
3 their questions on the record, so that
4 we are able to end on time because we
5 have a neighborhood budget meeting
6 this evening and we all need time to
7 turn around. Thank you for
8 understanding. Councilmember Landau?

9 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

10 Thank you. Thanks for being
11 here. Thank you for all the work that
12 you're doing to continue to improve
13 DHS. This is where my questions are.

14 Last year, I wanted to talk
15 to you about aging out of foster care
16 housing. And last year, I was asking
17 you questions about how can we house
18 the young people without relying on
19 adult shelters. You talked about
20 relying on OHS at that time.

21 And you also said that we had
22 -- you had a certain amount of family
23 reunification vouchers and fostering
24 youth to independence vouchers. It

1 was about 137 slots altogether. It
2 says -- and \$2 million is allocated to
3 this issue yearly.

4 How has the allocated funding
5 helped with placing youth who have
6 aged out of foster care and have the
7 slots been filled since last year?

8 You know, I have a particular
9 interest in this because so many of
10 the youth are -- identify as LGBTQ.
11 Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes, so
13 thank you for that question,
14 Councilmember Landau. I actually did
15 speak about older youth in that --
16 this was the first fiscal year.
17 Fiscal year '24 was the first fiscal
18 year in which we had under 200 young
19 people who fit the definition of aging
20 out. That was the lowest that we had
21 in 188 young people.

22 Typically, it hovered around
23 300. In terms of the housing support,
24 when I said last year in terms of

1 relying on OHS, it probably -- I
2 probably said PHA as well. I should
3 probably -- not relying, if you will,
4 with more of a partnership, if you
5 will, in terms of housing. And so in
6 terms of the Family Unification
7 Program, there are 116 clients that we
8 served.

9 In terms of the Fostering
10 Youth to Independence, there were 40
11 young people that we served and are
12 serving, and that's between 18 and 23
13 years of age.

14 We also have Generations Two
15 program through Northern Homes for
16 young adults. They have a capacity at
17 any given time to service seven young
18 people, Valley Youth House assist with
19 rental assistance. So we do rental
20 assistance, and we've served -- the --
21 our annual capacity is 60 young
22 people. We are serving over 30 young
23 people now. We have rep for youth
24 case management through Valley Youth

1 House, 28 young people are being
2 served.

3 And then we have Congreso who
4 provides rapid rehousing when
5 reunification is an issue for
6 families. We have 25 slots at any
7 given time to help those families.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Does
9 that add up to your number of
10 approximately 188?

11 COMMISSIONER ALI: All 180
12 youth are not in need of stable
13 housing. So the reason why we got to
14 the number with our program, that is
15 the DHS Older Youth Rental Assistance,
16 which was 60, is because approximately
17 60 of those young people need
18 additional rental assistance. DHS
19 stopped servicing young people at the
20 age of 21 by law.

21 However, our older Youth
22 Rental assistance provide housing
23 support to young people as well as
24 case management up to age 23. So,

1 they could stay an additional two
2 years in a subsidized apartment.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Okay.

4 MS. HARLEY: And
5 Councilwoman, I just wanted to say, as
6 you know, the Parker Administration is
7 very committed to the HOME, Housing
8 Opportunities Made Easy, the 30,000
9 units of housing that the Mayor has
10 committed to. And we will certainly
11 be thinking about this target
12 population as we think about, you
13 know, there are different categories
14 and different segments of housing as
15 we move forward, but we'll certainly
16 be also thinking about this target
17 population.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

19 Thank you so much. Quick
20 follow-up, is just there was an
21 Inquirer article that talked about
22 some DHS under spending, which would
23 be a savings. Is there any way in
24 which you can reallocate that money to

1 help more young people with housing?

2 MS. PERESE: Sure. That's a
3 great question. So actually the way
4 the budget was being reviewed, it
5 isn't actually under spending. DHS
6 has an appropriation of around about
7 30 to \$50 million within its budget.
8 And it's not -- we don't have
9 permission to spend that money, it's
10 just appropriations. So it's in the
11 event that we get additional grant
12 funds.

13 As you know, we don't always
14 get our award letter by the time the
15 budget comes through. So if there's a
16 need for more funding from the state
17 because we're awarded more than we
18 anticipated, that's where we draw that
19 down.

20 So we're not allowed to spend
21 that money, but it's in the budget
22 during the actual budget period. So
23 in FY26, it's in there, and then it
24 goes away because we don't actually

1 spend it, we're not allowed unless we
2 have additional grant dollars. So
3 it's just appropriations. I know it
4 can be a little bit -- a little tricky
5 there, but it's not actually under
6 spending.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Thank
8 you very much. Appreciate it.

9 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
10 RICHARDSON: Sure. Thank you. Thank
11 you, Councilmember Landau.

12 We're now moving to round
13 two. So as a reminder, colleagues,
14 thank you very much for your
15 consideration in advance. You will
16 have 90 seconds to put your questions
17 on the record. Once the bell rings,
18 I'm moving forward to the next
19 colleague.

20 The Chair now recognizes
21 Councilmember Jones.

22 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Heck of
23 a test case. One comment, two
24 questions quickly. Thank you,

1 Department of Education.

2 We had several months ago,
3 melees right out on the plaza with
4 young people there about 11 schools,
5 both Catholic, public, private, right
6 in this area, and they choose many of
7 them to use our plaza as their
8 playground. But for your team's
9 intervention and putting together a
10 plan, Mr. Mega, we might have had a
11 bad day outside. We had one shooting,
12 but we've been able to, you know, get
13 around that. So thank you. Thank
14 you, thank you.

15 Two questions. One,
16 kinsmanship care and placement. What
17 is the percentage of that versus
18 people that are unknown to the kids?
19 And what are the rights of siblings
20 when taken out into custody? Does a
21 young person have the right to visit,
22 a complaint about conditions? What
23 are their rights as it relates to
24 siblings? Was that 90 seconds?

1 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

2 RICHARDSON: Cool.

3 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Bam.

4 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. And

5 so when you look at our total DHS

6 population, we have 2,554 young people

7 in the city of Philadelphia that's in

8 child welfare population -- a child

9 welfare placement. Fifty percent of

10 those young people are with kinship.

11 So someone that they know or someone

12 that they -- that their family knows.

13 The other young people are in

14 foster care. It's around like

15 30-something percent in foster care.

16 And then we have residential placement

17 and supervised independent living.

18 In terms of sibling visits,

19 yes, siblings do have a right to visit

20 with their -- with their siblings who

21 are in care. And so we track that.

22 We track whether or not young people

23 are placed together or if young people

24 are placed apart, whether or not they

1 have visits. And so yes, they are
2 entitled to visits.

3 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
4 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Quick
6 follow-up. I just want to say, if me
7 and Jamie are brother and sisters, and
8 I feel that Jamie's being mistreated,
9 what are my rights?

10 COMMISSIONER ALI: So, Jamie,
11 should call the Commissioner's Action
12 Response Office. It is aligned
13 directly to my office, in which I have
14 staff who will fill the complaint,
15 talk to Jamie, figure out the issue,
16 and then follow-up with the team for
17 resolution.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
19 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

20 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
23 RICHARDSON: Thank you very much,
24 Commissioner and Councilmember Jones.

1 The Chair now recognizes
2 Councilmember Gauthier.

3 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

4 Thank you. My questions are
5 about data.

6 Several months ago, I asked
7 DHS to publish data about youth in
8 detention and placement on a quarterly
9 basis. I wanted to check in on the
10 status of that request.

11 Additionally, we are most
12 interested in seeing the lead charges
13 that send young people to placement.
14 So please tell us about your ability
15 to collect and share that information.
16 And then we would like to also see
17 demographic data; age, gender, and
18 race, if -- and if possible, zip
19 codes, so that we can know what areas
20 and demographics are most in needs of
21 services.

22 And then lastly, is there any
23 effort to track young people from
24 their first contact with the juvenile

1 justice system through every program
2 until they come home, and then to tie
3 that to outcomes?

4 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah, so
5 thank you, Councilmember Gauthier. As
6 you indicated, my myself as well as my
7 leadership in PJJSC, as well as PMT
8 have been working closely with your
9 office around data.

10 And so, yes, we are in the
11 final stages in terms of the
12 utilization data for young people who
13 are being held at the PJJSC, as well
14 as our community-based detention
15 services. I have a draft that we're
16 finalizing.

17 We also have data around, as
18 you indicated, the demographics, how
19 many were admitted during the quarter,
20 how many were discharged, race. Yes,
21 so we do have that and where they are
22 placed. So you should be receiving
23 that shortly in terms of that data.

24 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

1 Thank you so much. We look
2 forward to seeing that and to engaging
3 with you on it.

4 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
7 Councilmember Gauthier. The Chair now
8 recognizes Councilmember Brooks.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

10 Thank you. So we know that
11 10 percent of the School District's
12 funds comes from federal funding. And
13 we're talking about, like, Title 1 and
14 IDEA resources. So the School
15 District is protecting deficits and
16 school closings moving forward, even
17 without federal uncertainty.

18 What is the Mayor's Office of
19 Education doing to help the school
20 district brace for these potential
21 cuts or impacts? And second part is,
22 like, Medicaid reimbursements help pay
23 for additional nurses and social
24 workers in school, and have the

1 Administration looked at how many of
2 these positions may be impacted moving
3 forward?

4 MS. CARRERA: Again, Chief
5 Education Officer Dr. Debora Carrera.
6 Thank you, Councilwoman Brooks.

7 So, yes, we are aware of the
8 financial cliff that the District has
9 projected to be happening. And so the
10 Mayor's Office is -- this
11 administration is working closely with
12 the School District of Philadelphia
13 around those concerns as well.

14 As far as Medicaid, I'm going
15 to invite my Deputy Education Officer,
16 Sharon Ward to come up and have her
17 answer that piece.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank
19 you.

20 MS. WARD: Thanks so much.
21 Thank you so much for that question
22 and raising this issue. We're
23 obviously very concerned about what's
24 happening at the federal level. Right

1 now there's a great deal of
2 uncertainty. The cuts that we have
3 been expecting have not happened yet,
4 but they could very well happen over
5 the next two months when the Senate
6 and House take action on the budget
7 moving forward.

8 With respect to Title 1, and
9 with Medicaid, what we have heard from
10 the school district and from other
11 school districts is that the services
12 will continue to be provided by the --
13 by the school district of Philadelphia
14 or by other school districts. And
15 they will simply have to absorb the
16 costs.

17 So what that means is that
18 federal funding cuts that are on the
19 agenda could increase the deficits
20 that the school district has -- is
21 projecting.

22 On the flip side of that, we
23 have been working very closely with a
24 set of partners, including the school

1 district advocates with city council
2 to work towards increasing the share
3 of state funding that's coming
4 through. We saw a big increase last
5 year. We are very pleased with that
6 as part of the settlement of the
7 lawsuit.

8 This year's funding levels
9 were not as robust as last year, so we
10 are really looking forward to trying
11 to increase some state funding that
12 will help to insulate the school
13 district from these types of cuts.

14 And I do have to say that the
15 governor has also taken a strong
16 position on this. He has been very
17 vocal around protection of education
18 and other types of pass-through
19 funding that comes from the federal
20 government. So we'll be working
21 closely with the -- with the
22 Governor's administration.

23 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

24 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

1 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank
2 you so much.

3 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
4 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Councilmember
5 Brooks. The Chair now recognizes
6 Councilmember Bass.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
8 you, Madam Chair. Couple questions.
9 So a few years ago, Philadelphia was
10 highest in the nation when it comes to
11 removing youth from homes. Where are
12 we now?

13 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. And
14 so in terms of our removals, I
15 indicated that we have 2,554 young
16 people who are in child welfare
17 placement. That is down from the
18 6,200 that we had in 2017. So a sharp
19 decline in terms of the number of
20 young people who are no longer in
21 placement. And then at this time last
22 year, when I testified we were
23 actually at 3,001 young people.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So, no,

1 I'm sorry, I'm asking specific, like,
2 just where are we and compared to
3 other major cities, just to get a
4 sense of how we rank.

5 COMMISSIONER ALI: So I have
6 to wait until the other cities publish
7 their data. I can't do the -- I don't
8 know the ranking.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Do we
10 know where we were last year? Like,
11 the last available data?

12 COMMISSIONER ALI: I don't.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: The only
15 -- the last data that we had that was
16 published was from 2017.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.
18 And so that showed us as, like, the
19 highest?

20 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.
22 So we don't have the most recent.
23 Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER ALI: No, we

1 don't.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

3 Was I going to ask -- the juvenile
4 justice budget was 53 million, and
5 that's just to keep these kids on the
6 right track, right? And what's the
7 size of that population?

8 COMMISSIONER ALI: The size
9 of the juvenile justice population, we
10 actually had, in terms of who -- how
11 many we serviced, I could tell you how
12 many we serviced in juvenile justice.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: We
15 serviced -- oh, we serviced 506 young
16 people in our IPS. We serviced 1,378
17 in our CERCs. In our evening
18 reporting centers, we serviced 273
19 young people. In our in-home
20 detention, we service as 982 young
21 people. And don't fall down in the
22 hood, which is our gun mediation
23 program, we service 139 young people.
24 And PJJSC, as of today, we have 132

1 young people at PJJSC.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

3 So we serviced in total --

4 MS. HARLEY: Councilwoman, I

5 just want to add that PJJSC number is

6 not indicative of the total number.

7 That's a revolving number because

8 there are so many kids who are coming

9 in and out of there. So we would have

10 to go back, check the data, and could

11 potentially provide it to you at a

12 later time.

13 She's giving you the current

14 census. It's 132 in there right now,

15 but at any given time, there is -- my

16 rate of kids who are coming in and out

17 that would've been serviced.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BASS:

19 Understood. So the total

20 population roughly is about -- from

21 the numbers you gave is about 3,278.

22 And we spent \$53 million on that

23 population. And I'm not sure that

24 we're getting the outcomes that we

1 were hopeful for.

2 And I'm -- you know, it is --
3 it is just my thought that maybe we
4 could do something different. It
5 seems like if we just, you know,
6 invested more in their families, you
7 know, double down on, you know, the
8 family structure or the, you know, the
9 household or living or the foster
10 parents or whoever the caregiver is.

11 But we spent \$53 million
12 trying to make sure we keep 3,200
13 young people on the right track. And
14 I'm not sure that we are making --
15 we're moving the needle as we want to,
16 ought to, need to.

17 COMMISSIONER ALI: So what I
18 -- what I would say, so a couple
19 things. Number one, what I would
20 indicate in terms of the 53 million,
21 the numbers that I said, except for
22 the PJJSC, those were the number of
23 young people that we served in FY24.

24 The PJJSC, we service about

1 500 young people every quarter coming
2 to the PJJSC, and about the same
3 amount actually discharged. FY24, we
4 saw some additional young people that
5 got discharged, which brought our
6 census down to below the 184 young
7 people.

8 But in addition, in terms of
9 when I said court and community
10 services, the young people who are at
11 the PJJSC, the vocational training
12 that Dr. Williams testified to, that
13 is included and court in community
14 services. That contract is -- of
15 that, it's \$1 million dollars of the
16 \$53 million.

17 The contract in terms of
18 YouthBuild services for young people,
19 that's another million dollar
20 contract. Because when you're talking
21 about providing skilled trades to
22 young people to also connect them to
23 jobs, there's an expense associated
24 with it.

1 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Of

2 course.

3 COMMISSIONER ALI: But in

4 terms of -- but in terms of our

5 outcomes and what's the result. And

6 so we did at the -- in connection with

7 Councilmember Gauthier's office in

8 terms of -- looked at, we were -- we

9 began to look at recidivism to

10 determine how many young people --

11 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: So

12 what's the number? I'm sorry.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

14 RICHARDSON: It's way over time.

15 COMMISSIONER ALI: So 13

16 percent --

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

18 RICHARDSON: Go ahead.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I'm

20 sorry.

21 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thirteen

22 percent of the young people who

23 received services through juvenile

24 justice actually recidivated. We have

1 not been able to -- don't have the
2 bandwidth to determine what programs
3 they received and then recidivated.
4 So what we have done is issued an RFP
5 because we need some support in that.

6 We have a phenomenal division
7 in performance management technology,
8 but we had to build some additional
9 capacity. And so you will begin to
10 see, once we select that provider,
11 some additional reports in terms of
12 outcomes, because we want to make sure
13 that what we are paying for works.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I know
15 we're over time. Will there be a
16 third round?

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
18 RICHARDSON: So possibly. We have one
19 more colleague in the queue for this
20 round.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
23 RICHARDSON: So I'll -- please let me
24 acknowledge Councilmember Landau for

1 your last question. And then
2 Councilmember Bass, I'll circle back
3 to you. You'll be our last member for
4 today. Okay.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: This
6 is a very quick one for the Office of
7 Education.

8 What data are we using to
9 select the neighborhoods or schools
10 which are included in the expansion of
11 Extended Day/Extended Year?

12 MS. CARRERA: Again,
13 Dr. Debora Carrera, chief education
14 officer. Thank you, Council Woman --
15 Councilmember Landau.

16 What we're doing is we are --
17 we're actually working closely with
18 the school district, the Office of
19 Children and Families. We are -- this
20 is the pilot year. We have a
21 consultant that has been really
22 working with us to look at all kinds
23 of data, to look at socioeconomic
24 status, demographic data,

1 neighborhood, gun violence, just
2 looking at a myriad of data, and we've
3 been coming up with different
4 scenarios of schools that could
5 qualify in -- with those datas -- with
6 that data set.

7 But we are working very
8 closely, again, with the school
9 district, the Office of Children and
10 Families to select -- and charter
11 schools to select the 10 and the 5 for
12 the next round.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE -

14 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Councilmember Landau.

16 Councilmember Bass, would you
17 like to be recognized?

18 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yes. I
19 -- just, you know, one last question,
20 and that was -- Commissioner, one of
21 the things you had mentioned earlier
22 that I've lost my train of thought on,
23 and that you said you were going to
24 address was, how do -- how do we pay

1 less and get more? And you said you
2 wanted to answer that.

3 COMMISSIONER ALI: And what I
4 wanted to do in that is, you know,
5 clarify, you know, the narrative. I
6 know when Vanessa was commissioner at
7 the time, in terms of the narrative
8 around the CUA system would be less
9 expensive. That was inaccurate. And
10 we put that on the record previously.

11 We want to make sure that we
12 have qualified staff to work with our
13 most vulnerable population. And so we
14 want to make sure that they are paid
15 appropriately. We also make sure that
16 whatever the needs of the community,
17 that they also have the discretionary
18 funds in order to meet the ever-
19 changing needs, you know, of the
20 community.

21 And so I just wanted to
22 double down on that comment in terms
23 of it being less. As our CFO Perese
24 testified to, the CUA system is \$114

1 million in order to provide quality
2 services to our most vulnerable young
3 people who have been abused and
4 neglected.

5 MS. HARLEY: And could I just
6 -- a point a clarification,
7 Councilwoman. Vanessa was not the
8 commissioner when that narrative was
9 put forward.

10 COMMISSIONER ALI:
11 Absolutely. You clarified.

12 MS. HARLEY: The commissioner
13 was Anne Marie Ambrose at that time.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I was
15 going to say --

16 COMMISSIONER ALI: She
17 clarified.

18 MS. HARLEY: And I probably
19 was the one who clarified --

20 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes.

21 MS. HARLEY: -- that it was
22 never really meant to be a cost-saving
23 measure. It really was about trying
24 to increase quality and to bring the

1 services to the community where we
2 hoped that people would avail
3 themselves of those services. And so
4 it was about the community based
5 delivery of services.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
7 you. I was going to say, was there
8 another Vanessa who was the
9 commissioner?

10 COMMISSIONER ALI: No, I said
11 "clarified." So she clarified --

12 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: A
13 different Vanessa.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: --
15 clarified that on the record.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I know.

17 COMMISSIONER ALI: -- a few
18 years ago. Yes.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Yeah.
20 No, I remember it was Ms. Ambrose.
21 But thank you so much for being here
22 today. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

1 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
2 Councilmember Bass and thank you to
3 all of the members who offered a very
4 poignant question this afternoon.

5 We want to, again, thank the
6 Department of Human Services, Mayor's
7 Office of Education and all of the
8 offices that are represented here for
9 your testimony, for your partnership,
10 and for the continued collaboration.
11 We certainly appreciate each and every
12 one of you.

13 MS. HARLEY: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank you.

15 MS. CARRERA: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 This concludes our budget
18 hearing for the day.

19 The Chair recognizes
20 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore-
21 Richardson for a motion that the
22 public hearing and meeting on the
23 bills and resolutions before the
24 committee today stand in recess until

1 Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025, at
2 10:00 a.m.

3 All those in favor, please
4 signify by saying aye.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

8 It has been moved and
9 properly seconded that the public
10 hearing and meeting on the bills and
11 resolution before the committee today
12 stand in recess until Wednesday, April
13 2nd, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

14 All those in favor signify by
15 saying aye. Those opposed?

16 The ayes have it. And this
17 hearing stays in recess until April
18 2nd, Tuesday -- no, Wednesday at
19 10:00 a.m. Thank you very much.

20 (Public hearing and meeting concluded at 4:00 p.m.)

21

22

23

24

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I hereby certify that the proceedings and
evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
notes taken by me of the above case, and this copy is a
correct transcript of the same.

Samanda J. Rios

Samanda J. Rios
Court Reporter
Notary Public of PA & DE

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