



YOUTH BUREAU
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
11 AMHERST PLACE • WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10601
(914) 422-1378 • FAX: (914) 422-6489

JOSEPH M. DELFINO
MAYOR

FRANK WILLIAMS, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LINDA PUOPLO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

2007 Division of Budget Hearing – November 30, 2007

Testimony from:

Frank Williams, Jr.
Executive Director
White Plains Youth Bureau
11 Amherst Place
White Plains, New York 10601

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. I have been employed with the White Plains Youth Bureau for twenty years, six as Executive Director. The White Plains youth Bureau serves over 2200 children a day, more than 6000 youth each year through some 50 different programs. In 1999 we were named a national model program by the US Department of Education. We have two programs that have been named best practice programs by the National League of Cities.

The White Plains Youth Bureau was founded in 1970 with a purpose of helping our youth reach their full potential.

It is critical now, more than ever that the formula for YDDP funding be strengthened. The Youth Bureau system, a unified system of more than 107 Youth Bureaus throughout New York State is doing a yeomen's job with limited resources. No other State in our country has such a coordinated system as we do in New York State. However, our funding has not kept pace with our current youth needs.

The prison pipeline is real in our communities, especially communities of color. This pipeline is growing. If a child is not involved in after school care, where is our hope for the future.

We have more than 700 children involved in our agency's after school programs. We however, should be serving another one thousand kids in after school programs in White Plains. However, due to lack of resources, parents are not enrolling their children in after school care. This problem is more severe in public housing and low-income environments where parents are working two jobs to make ends meet. They cannot afford after school care because of the cost of high rents. Consequently, kids come home to unsupervised homes, watch television, go outside and play and don't complete their homework.

Over the last two years, in White Plains, Mt. Vernon, Yonkers and lower Westchester County, we have been impacted as a result of youth violence, gangs and gang "wannabees."

We need resources to combat this problem and provide opportunities for children, all children to grow up safe, healthy with skills to compete in a global environment. We need resources to help our children read, develop computer literacy and have a safe haven from home. The point to all of this is not to build more prisons, but to invest in our youth to create tomorrow's best workers.

As I mentioned, Youth Bureaus have done an outstanding job of helping youth succeed. Just think how much more we can do, how many more kids we could reach, how many more kids we could save if we had the resources.

I strongly encourage you to strengthen funding of our Youth Development Funding (YDDP) and significantly improve funding for after school programs.

Incarcerating more youth is not the answer. I leave you with this note, An African American young man, Harry Jefferson Jr. who graduated from White Plains High School this past year and is enrolled in Babson College sent a note to me, thanking us for caring. He said that if it were not for the Youth Bureau, he's not sure where he would be. I admit, I'm not sure where he would be either.

Thank you for your time and attention.