

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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REDUCE CRIME, REBUILD LIVES, MAKE NYC SAFER & SAVE TAX DOLLARS THROUGH ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION & REENTRY PROGRAMS

The Alternatives to Incarceration/Reentry Coalition is joined by NYC elected officials at City Hall rally to launch the ***Blueprint for Criminal Justice Reform*** and call for increased funding for proven-effective programs

(May 25, 2016 – New York, NY) – Members of the **New York Alternatives to Incarceration/Reentry Coalition** were joined today by elected officials and New York’s alternatives to incarceration and reentry community in a rally on the steps of City Hall to urge leaders to increase funding to expand the City’s alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs, and to launch the ***Blueprint for Criminal Justice Reform***, a comprehensive plan to improve New York City’s criminal justice system. The Blueprint highlights support for initiatives already underway or proposed by the Mayor and/or the Speaker and the City Council, recommends additional reforms the City could undertake, and highlights how the City—working with the Office of Court Administration and District Attorneys’ Offices—can further expand diversion and reentry opportunities.

The New York Alternatives to Incarceration/Reentry Coalition requests that the City Council increase funding for alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs to \$5.357 million, a \$1 million increase to the funding allocated to the ten current members of the Coalition in FY 2016. The increased funding would be divided equally among the Coalition members and would enable the Coalition to:

- Reach populations and communities not served by programs funded by City agency contracts;
- Provide ATI/Reentry services and programs not funded by City agency contracts;
- Be responsive to the City’s evolving criminal justice landscape, meeting the increasing demand for ATI/Reentry services for existing and emerging populations in need of the Coalition’s diverse range of services;
- Build on the Coalition’s track record of offering effective services that reduce crime and break the cycle of incarceration while saving tax dollars and strengthening communities; and
- Continue to advocate for reforms to the criminal justice system through the Coalition’s Blueprint for Criminal Justice Reform.

Alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs also help the City and State correctional systems save more than \$100 million each year. Alternatives to Incarceration/Reentry Coalition programs cost

approximately \$18,250 per participant annually, far less than the cost for adult incarceration which can cost over \$96,000 per person annually as well as juvenile detention which can cost over \$200,000 per person annually.¹

Members of the **Alternatives to Incarceration/Reentry Coalition** stress that New York City's success in bringing crime rates down to historic lows is closely tied to its strong infrastructure of community-based programs that provide training, counseling, education, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services, anger management, family and parenting services and other tools essential that help participants find employment and housing and to live stable crime-free lives.

"The blueprint released today shows the ATI Coalition's invaluable place in our city. Through expanded diversion opportunities, transitional services and more, we can lower recidivism rates even further. This will ultimately save New York City dollars by providing alternatives to incarceration. As the Chair of the Fire and Criminal Justice Services, I continue to see firsthand the coalition's benefits for families and the City as a whole, and I thank everyone involved for their dedication to reforming offenders and keeping them out of jail," **said City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley.**

"ATI and reentry programs are an integral part of our criminal justice system. As this Council continues its push for criminal justice reform, I firmly believe funding for diversion, reintegration, and rehabilitation services must be a part of the conversation," **said Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson.** *"ATI/reentry programs ensure individuals most at risk for ongoing involvement with the criminal justice system are given the support they need—and deserve—to remain positively engaged with their communities. The additional funding the Council provided to these programs resulted in increased service levels this past fiscal year, from mental health services and substance abuse counseling to job placement and housing assistance. The impact of these programs in lowering the recidivism rate is evidence that funding ATI/reentry programs is a sound investment with a high return. I am thankful for the phenomenal work the ATI/Reentry Coalition member organizations do, both in my district in the Bronx and citywide, and hope to see increased funding for the coalition in the FY17 budget to further expand their impact."*

"As a city that often espouses our commitment to criminal justice reform, it's time to put our money where our mouth is and fully fund alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs in this year's budget," **said Council Member Rory I. Lancman, chair of the Courts & Legal Services Committee.** *"These programs provide substance abuse and mental illness treatment and connect people with criminal justice histories to jobs and education, all while saving taxpayers millions of dollars every year. It's time to make them available throughout the city."*

"As Chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee, I have seen firsthand how alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs can literally be life-changing for individual offenders who would otherwise go to jail. ATI and reentry programs have proven effective in reducing rates of recidivism while still protecting public safety, and

I am proud to support New York City's efforts to increase access to these programs as part of broader efforts to reform our criminal justice system.” —Council Member Fernando Cabrera

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., said: *“Reentry programs and alternatives to incarceration give New Yorkers a second chance to be productive members of their communities. By reducing unnecessary incarceration while working to decrease recidivism, these initiatives make our neighborhoods safer for all New Yorkers. I thank the ATI/Reentry Coalition for bringing attention to these critical programs which enhance safety and fairness in our criminal justice system.”*

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THE ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION (ATI) REENTRY COALITION is a coalition of 10 organizations: **Bronx Connect** (Urban Youth Alliance), the **Center for Alternative Sentencing & Employment Services (CASES)**; **Center for Community Alternatives (CCA)**; **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**; **Education & Assistance Corporation (EAC)**; **NYC TASC & Mental Health Programs**; the **Greenburger Center for Social and Criminal Justice**; **The Fortune Society**; **The Legal Action Center (LAC)**; the **Osborne Association**; and **Women's Prison Association (WPA)**. Coalition members provide alternatives to incarceration for men, women, and youth as well as support services for those who have completed their sentences and are returning to the community. Although incarceration has long been the primary response to crime, it is incredibly expensive and often fails both to improve public safety and prevent future crimes committed by people released from jail or prison. The ATI Reentry Coalition, through its programs, enables New York City to reduce crime and break the cycle of incarceration, while saving tax dollars and communities.

1. Source: 2014 final report of the NYS Governor's Commission on Youth, Public Safety and Justice.