
MAYOR NUTTER RESTORES FOSTER CARE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR 14,000 PHILADELPHIA CHILDREN

Philadelphia, February 19 – Mayor Michael A. Nutter announced today that he is restoring child protective services for nearly 14,000 young people in Philadelphia and that he has asked Philadelphia Safe and Sound to preserve all afterschool programs (including afterschool at Beacons), curfew centers, Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership (AVRP) and Families and Schools Together (FaST) programs.

“Irresponsible behavior by adults has created a situation which has put the well-being and care of thousands of children in jeopardy,” said Mayor Nutter. “The steps that I have announced today are an effort to correct mistakes made by the previous administration and to ensure that no child is left without essential care services.”

In December 2007 the previous administration sent suspension notices to two hundred foster care, emergency shelter and other youth service providers indicating that their contracts would end two months early on April 30, 2008. However the City of Philadelphia is mandated by law to provide these services and therefore the Nutter Administration is restoring these contracts to 12 months.

These contracts were cut short by the last administration in order to make additional funding available to finance the awarding of a \$75m no-bid contract to Philadelphia Safe and Sound, the non-profit organization responsible for contracting out prevention services for children, despite the fact that City Council only approved \$54m for this contract and twice rejected attempts to transfer additional funds. The organization has been instructed to identify further savings, particularly within their administrative budget, in order to maximize services for children and reconcile their un-appropriated spending plan with the funding available in the city budget.

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In January, the Nutter Administration directed Safe and Sound to reduce its budget to the level authorized by City Council and the State while preserving afterschool opportunities, curfew centers and other critical services for children. However, Safe and Sound did not act as directed, in some cases sending termination letters to curfew centers, and has been unable to assure that all children would continue to be able to attend an afterschool program within a half mile of their current program.

As a result, the Nutter Administration is now publicly directing the organization to preserve all afterschool programs, including afterschool programs at Beacons, and to preserve funding for curfew centers, AVRP and FaST so that there will be no reductions in the number of children served. Continued funding for these programs will come from savings within Philadelphia Safe and Sound’s budget, particularly their substantial administrative costs. The administration will make every effort to find any additional funding needed within the city’s budget.

Mayor Nutter also announced that he would be installing a City monitor at the office of Philadelphia Safe and Sound to monitor how they spend City funds and that an assessment team would be sent into the organization in the coming days to evaluate its current status. Additionally, decisions regarding the future funding of Philadelphia Safe and Sound will be informed by a Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare audit, the results of which are expected to be published in the spring.

Additional information

The City Monitor will be **Tom Sheaffer** from the Office of Health and Opportunity.

The assessment team will be chaired by **Michael Schwartz**, former Head of the Corruption, Civil Rights, Labor and Tax division of the U.S. Attorney's office. Other members include:

Kevin Dow – Community Affairs Manager, Wachovia Foundation

Mary Goldman – community activist

David Hyman – Managing Partner, Kleinbard, Bell & Brecker, LLP.

Lorena Marshall-Blake – Vice President, Government Relations, Independence Blue Cross

Angel Ortiz – former member of Philadelphia City Council

They will be supported by staff from DHS, Department of Finance, the Inspector General's office and City Council.

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