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Mayor's Report Indicates Slight Improvements By Agencies After Increased Spend

By Laura Nahmias

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More money has meant fewer problems for Mayor Bill de Blasio in the fiscal year that ended June 30, with progress made on hundreds of benchmarks the mayor's administration set for dozens of city agencies, according to the annual Mayor's Management Report released Monday.

The report, de Blasio's third so-called "agency report card" since he took office in January 2014, spans 356 pages on 44 agencies with roughly 2,000 different data indicators, and shows the state of some of the mayor's key priorities.

The de Blasio administration said that for the 2016 fiscal year, 59 percent of the indicators show improved or stable performance, compared to 57 percent in Fiscal Year 2015 and 56 percent in FY 2014.

On critical indicators, considered key measures of agency performance, 56 percent showed improved or stable performance in Fiscal Year 2016, the same level as in the previous year.

The slight improvement overall and stasis on critical indices comes despite increased spending by the administration and a rapidly expanding headcount of city workers.

The city's annual budget has grown from \$70 billion since de Blasio took office to \$82.1 billion under the spending plan approved for the current fiscal year, which began July 1. De Blasio and the City Council approved a \$78.5 billion spending plan in June 2015 for the fiscal year covered by the MMR, which ended June 30.

Citizens Budget Commission analyst Maria Doulis, who studies the city budget, said more money seemed, in some cases, to translate to progress.

"The MMR shows improvement in some important indicators where there have been additional resources budgeted," Doulis said. "But by and large agencies do not report efficiency measures or benchmark performance that would tell us whether City taxpayers getting a good bang for the buck."

Here is how the city did on some key indicators:

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT



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The number of major felonies rose by about 1.7 percent, from 103,782 in FY 2015 to 105,615 in 2016, with increases in the number of reported rapes, grand larcenies and felony assaults. The number of murders and non-negligent homicides actually dipped slightly, to 341 from 348.

The NYPD is responding faster, thanks to new smartphones and tablets distributed to uniformed officers who now have more information pushed to them, according to city officials.

The average response time to "all crimes in progress," dropped by 23 seconds - from 10 minutes, 58 seconds in FY 2015, to 10 minutes, 35 seconds in FY 2016, according to the report. There was another 20-second drop in response times "to critical crimes in progress," from 7 minutes, 29 seconds FY 2015, to 7 minutes, 9 seconds in FY 2016.

But there was a significant uptick in how long it took for police to respond to "non-critical crimes in progress," from 16 minutes, 17 seconds in FY 2015, to 17 minutes, 21 seconds in FY 2016.

There has also been a reduction in reported quality-of-life violations, according to the report.

There were 7,852 fewer quality-of-life summonses issued by the police - 323,980 in Fiscal Year 2016 compared to 331,832 in FY 2015. Summonses for "unreasonable noise" dropped, from 8,249 in FY 2015, to 5,487 in 2016. And graffiti arrests were down significantly, from 2,687 to 2,123.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

The FDNY responded to fewer structural fires in the most recent fiscal year than they did the year before. According to the report, the FDNY responded to 26,922 structural fires, 15,044 non structural fires, and 240,624 non-fire, non-medical emergencies in FY 2016.

The share of non-fire, non-medical emergencies the FDNY is responding to has increased 16 percent between Fiscal Years 2012 and 2016, from 206,782 to 240,624.

Increasingly, the work of firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians has less to do with responding to fires, and more to do with responding to medical emergencies. Firefighters and EMTs responded to 570,594 life-threatening medical emergencies in FY 2016, an increase of 8.2 percent over FY 2015, when they responded to 526,904 such calls.

In just five years, the number of life-threatening medical emergency calls the FDNY and ambulances are responding to has grown by 23.5 percent. Firefighters and EMTs are responding to a rapidly-increasing number of calls to help with cases of cardiac arrest or choking - the number of such cases increased 11 percent between the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years, from 29,719 incidents to 33,096.

Such calls have increased by almost 40 percent in the past five years.

And while the report shows that, on average, the combined end-to-end response time to such life-threatening medical emergencies has decreased by an average of one second in fiscal year 2016,



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to 8 minutes, 17 seconds from an average of 8 minutes, 18 seconds in 2015, there are still discrepancies in the response times for ambulances and fire trucks.

Ambulances are still taking, on average, almost two minutes longer to respond to life-threatening medical emergencies than firefighters, according to the report. End-to-end average response times to such incidents by ambulances in fiscal year 2016 was 9 minutes, 9 seconds, while firefighters' average responses took 7 minutes, 20 seconds.

The overall response to fires is faster, generally, than the response to medical emergencies, although the response time has been creeping up for several years. The FDNY's end-to-end average response time to structural fires increased slightly this past year over the previous year, and has been steadily increasing since fiscal year 2013, when the average response time was 4 minutes, 47 seconds. In Fiscal year 2016, the average end-to-end response time was 4 minutes, 55 seconds.

RIKERS ISLAND

The Mayor's Management Report shows that violence among inmates at Rikers Island has dramatically increased over the past year, despite de Blasio's efforts to stem the violence at the city jail.

Between Fiscal Year s2015 and 2016, there was a 19.3-percent increase in the number of fights among inmates during and a 21.3-percent increase in stabbings and slashings, despite a drop in the overall population. The jail's average daily population fell 4 percent over the course of the year, to 9,970 in FY 2016.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

More New Yorkers are recycling, Although not as much as de Blasio's administration would like. The residential recycling rate grew to 16.9 percent in FY 2016, up from 16 percent the previous year. The rate still fell short of the city's goal of 19 percent for the year, and the city's recycling rates paled in comparison to those of West Coast cities, where residential recycling rates are often 70 to 80 percent.

HEALTH

The percentage of uninsured adult New Yorkers continued to decrease, from 13.8 percent in FY 2015 to 12.6 percent in 2016.

In bleaker news, deaths from drug overdoses are up.

During FY 2016, the number of drug overdose deaths citywide increased to 939, from 753 in the year before. More and more of those overdoses are linked to heroin and the use of fentanyl, a short-acting opioid described as 10 to 30 times more potent than heroin.



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The report also showed mixed news for the struggling NYC Health + Hospitals, which has built a plan to bolster its sinking finances, in part on hopes of increasing the number of patients it serves and increasing total enrollment in MetroPlus, its insurance plan. The hospital system did not succeed in its first goal as the number of unique patients actually declined from 1,172,405 patients in FY 2015 to 1,168,663, following a trend that has persisted for years. Meanwhile, the number of enrollees at MetroPlus increased 6.1 percent, to 501,134.

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

The number of clients whom HRA helped gain employment increased by roughly 1 percent, from 46,600 in FY 2015 to 47,000. The number is roughly 2 percent less than in 2014, when 48,100 HRA clients gained employment.

HOMELESSNESS

One of the major efforts de Blasio's administration has undertaken over the past year is a more robust plan to help the city's homeless, as the number of New Yorkers living in shelters hovered around 60,000 for more than a year after rising significantly following the collapse of a rental subsidy program known as Advantage in 2011.

Fewer single adults exited shelters to permanent housing in Fiscal Year 2016, with the figure decreasing by 1 percent compared to 2015 and by 14 percent compared to 2014. The mayor's report said that limited affordable housing and family reunification options for low-income single adults are to blame for the decrease.

The average time single adults and adult families spent in shelter increased by 8 percent in 2016 from the previous year, to 355 days for single adults, and by 5 percent, to 563 days for adult families. The report says this reflects the need for more supportive housing, which will be available in 2017.

The average time in shelter for families with children remained unchanged in 2016 compared to 2015.

The city's outreach teams placed 20 percent fewer chronically homeless people into permanent and temporary housing in 2016 compared to 2015, which the report says is due to a lack of available Safe Haven beds. The city expects to place more chronically homeless people in 2017 when more supportive housing and Safe Haven beds become available. De Blasio has announced plans to open 500 new Safe Haven Beds.

The total daily cost for homeless shelters dramatically increased in FY 2016 after remaining roughly steady for the previous four years, the report shows, with daily costs growing from \$78.80 for single adult shelters in FY 2015 to \$94.57 a day in 2016. Costs increased from \$105.37 per day for family shelters in FY 2015 to \$120.22 per day in 2016.



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The mayor's report said the increased costs were the "result of increased security costs; new costs for enhancements, including mental health services and activities in adult shelters; cost of living adjustments for contract providers; utilization of emergency commercial hotels; and the opening of new shelters, which generally have higher rent and fixed costs than do older, established facilities."

The percentage of families placed in the shelter system according to the youngest school-aged child's school address increased slightly in 2016 but is almost 10 percent less than in 2014. According to the report, 55 percent of school-aged homeless children are being placed in shelter according to their school address. The MMR says the low vacancy rate at shelters has made it difficult to place families that way but notes the city is bringing more shelters online in 2017.

Despite a pervasive sense last fall that the number of homeless people living on the city's streets was growing, and a pledge from Gov. Andrew Cuomo to step in to help the city manage its homelessness crisis, the number of people counted as homeless and living unsheltered on the city's streets declined, the report shows, from 3,182 during an annual census done in February 2015, to 2,794 in February 2016.

NYCHA

The New York City Housing Authority had generally a mixed performance on its promises this year. The authority hasn't been able to improve on its 94.9 percent rent collection rate from FY 2015. The rate held steady in 2016.

And while the average time it took to resolve emergency service requests decreased from an average 14.7 hours to 13.1 hours, the average time to resolve non-emergency service requests increased, from 14 days in FY 2015 to 14.7 days in 2016. The average time it took to repair elevator outages increased by 34 percent, from 6.5 hours to 8.7 hours. Elevator outage rates also increased, from 0.9 elevator outages per month, to 1.13. Elevator injuries in NYCHA buildings also increased, from 17 in 2015 to 20 in FY 2016.

It's also taking longer for NYCHA to prepare newly-vacated apartments for new tenants because the building complexes are so old that they are increasingly in need of more extensive repair before tenants can move back in. But NYCHA is turning around vacant apartments for rent at a faster rate than in previous years, according to the report.

Crime at NYCHA developments increased in FY 2016. Major felony crimes increased 7 percent, from 4,858 in FY 2015 to 5,205 in 2016.

-- additional reporting by Azi Paybarah, Brendan Cheney, David Giambusso, Gloria Pazmino, Colby Hamilton, Addy Baird and Dan Goldberg