

Street Chaplaincy of New York City Program Proposal

Executive Brief – For Government and Philanthropic Review

Overview

The **Street Chaplaincy of New York City (SCNYC)** is a public-facing, interfaith program designed to strengthen the City’s prevention-first, public-health approach to community safety. Chaplains provide calm presence, trauma-informed listening, and immediate emotional stabilization in public spaces such as subways, sidewalks, shelters, and parks. The program complements police, EMS, social workers, and outreach teams by addressing the relational and spiritual dimensions of crisis—areas that high-volume systems often cannot meet.

The model aligns with the goals of the new **Department of Community Safety (DCS)**:

- Mental-health support
- Homelessness reduction
- Subway and street safety
- Gun-violence prevention
- Victim support
- Interagency coordination

Program Functions

Street chaplains:

- De-escalate distress and reduce unnecessary 911 calls
- Connect individuals to DHS Outreach, Mobile Crisis Teams, hospitals, shelters, and food programs
- Support officers, EMS workers, and hospital staff by providing emotional continuity in difficult scenes
- Offer interfaith or secular spiritual care on request
- Model respect, patience, and direct communication

Chaplains operate only in teams, with strict safety protocols and daily reporting structures.

Staffing Structure

Professional Chaplains:

A core group of trained chaplains serves all five boroughs, supervised and evaluated by senior staff.

CPE Interns:

Clinical Pastoral Education students complete 400-hour units in the field under ACPE supervision. This model supplies thousands of service hours annually at low cost.

Volunteer Clergy:

Ministers, rabbis, priests, imams, monks, and trained lay leaders donate additional coverage, strengthening ties with faith communities.

Budget and Cost Efficiency

A complete pilot-year budget is prepared:

- **Pilot cost:** approximately **\$1.4M**
- **Cost offsets:**
 - 6,000 hours/year of CPE intern service
 - Volunteer clergy hours
 - Donated space from partners
- **Potential funders:** Trinity Church Wall Street, Robin Hood Foundation, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, religious foundations, and corporate community-affairs divisions

The model is significantly more cost-efficient than clinical or enforcement-heavy interventions.

Evaluation Framework

SCNYC uses both quantitative and qualitative metrics:

- Total interactions and hours of presence
- Number of successful referrals
- Crisis de-escalations
- Community trust indicators
- Partner feedback from DCS, NYPD Community Affairs, DHS, H+H
- Borough coverage and consistency
- Integration of CPE learning outcomes

Annual reports will be public and transparent.

Status: Proposal Ready for Immediate Review

The full SCNYC proposal includes:

- Operational plan
- Budget
- Staffing structure
- Training curriculum

- CPE integration
- Safety protocols
- Evaluation framework
- Potential funders
- Interagency collaboration plan

It is ready to present to the Department of Community Safety, NYPD Community Affairs, philanthropic foundations, or the transition team.

Should the program succeed, it will be replicable in other American cities and communities.

Founder

Charles Huschle, a native New Yorker, is an experienced interfaith hospital chaplain who has served at Massachusetts General Hospital (including the Boston Marathon bombing response), Mount Sinai Hospital, Boulder Community Hospital, and Lowell General Hospital during COVID.

His training includes trauma-informed care, GRACE compassion protocols, contemplative practice, and participation in Zen street retreats in the Glassman lineage. His background includes teaching, fundraising, and program management for a variety of non-profit humanitarian organizations.

At age 63, he is semi-retired due to disability and has resided for two years in France, where he is writer, strategist, and artist (long-term temporary visa status). His roots and heart remain in NYC, where many family members and children make their home.

He is prepared to serve approximately twenty hours per week to direct the program's launch and first years in the city, once housing and compensation can be arranged.

Contact:

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