

August 31, 2025

Contact:

Press@legal-aid.org

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Legal Aid Statement on Death of 44-Year-Old Jimmy Avila in DOC Custody

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement on the death of Jimmy Avila, who was just 44 years old when he died in custody of the New York City Department of Correction (DOC):

“Jimmy Avila is the third New Yorker to die in City custody in just the past week. Mr. Avila, who struggled with serious mental health issues, passed away on Rikers Island after being held there for less than 24 hours. Given his condition, this should have been immediately flagged at intake, and he should have been under DOC’s close watch.

“Moreover, the fact that defense counsel found out about his death from a press release instead of outreach from the Department is completely unacceptable. With each of these deaths, the City responds with the same boilerplate language, but conditions don’t improve, the people we represent continue to suffer, and these tragic deaths continue to mount.

“The Administration’s failure to act in the face of these deaths is appalling and exposes the City’s utter disregard for the safety of the people in their care.

“Our sincere condolences go out to Mr. Avila’s family, friends, and loved ones, and we demand an immediate, independent, and thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.”

###

The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit organization that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For nearly 150 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.

www.legalaidnyc.org/