

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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February 25, 2014

Start: 1:12 p.m.

Recess: 3:30 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Hearing Rm,
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:
MATHIEU EUGENE
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Darlene Mealy
Margaret S. Chin
Andy L. King
Laurie A. Cumbo
Chaim M. Deutsch

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Alan Cheng
Assistant Commissioner for Youth Workforce
Development
New York City Department of Youth and
Community Development

Andre White
Director of SYEP
New York City Department of Youth and
Community Development

Heather Ramirez
Public Service Scholar from Hunter College
United Neighborhood Houses (UNH)

Kevin Douglas
Policy Analyst
United Neighborhood Houses (UNH)

Kelly Daniels
National Urban Fellow
Neighborhood Family Services Coalition

Kevin Coffey
Senior Vice President for Education and
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CAMBA

Sean Reyes
Director of Youth Employment Services
Queens Community House

Rabbi Pikus

Yolanda McBride
Director of Public Policy
Representing Sandino Sanchez
The Children's Aid Society

Shira Sameroff
Center for Family Life

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Christian
SYEP Applicant

Stephanie
SYEP Participant

Shirley
SYEP Participant

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon. I'm

Council Member Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the Council

Committee on Youth Services. The topic of today's

hearing is a Summer Youth Employment Program. As

most of you know, the Summer Youth Employment Program

provides New York City youth between the age of 14

and 24 with summer employment and educational

opportunities. It also provides a negative workers

for local not-for-profit organizations and additional

customers for local businesses.

In the summer of 2013, a number of

changes were made to the Summer Youth Program;

notably, the duration of the program was reduced to

six weeks and young people were split into four

different service models. We are interested in

learning more about all these changes have affected

the work site providers and youth participants.

In addition, the City and State of New

York have taken recent measures to improve the

quality of life of all residents. I applaud the

effort of our leadership to make it possible for New

York City people to better provide for their

families.

Giving these recent changes, we must find ways the program the city provides, particularly for our youth, can meet these new standards. We also would like to better understand the impact of these new measures on the Summer Youth Employment Program. In the summer of 2013, New York City received 135,388 applications for the Summer Youth Program and was able to award only 35,957 participants. That means that more than 70 percent of all applicants were denied a place in the Summer Youth Program.

Now, due to the minimum wage increase there will be an additional 3,700 slot cut from the Summer Youth Program in summer 2014. We would like to discuss the impact of this cut and what the city instead can do to prevent elimination of slots.

At today's hearing we expect that we will hear from a number of advocates, providers and other interested persons regarding these issues. We hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that the Summer Youth Program continues to provide valuable work experience for the New York City young people.

At this time I would like to acknowledge that we have been joined by Council Member King,

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2 Council Member Chin and I would like to take the
3 opportunity also to thank the people who have worked
4 very hard to make this hearing possible, Jennifer
5 Wilcox, Counsel, and Michael Benjamin, Policy
6 Analyst, and also Kenneth Rice [phonetic], Financial
7 Policy Analyst. And I want to thank also my staff,
8 **00:05:49** and also David for working very hard also to
9 make this, you know a very successful hearing.

10 And let me take also the opportunity to
11 thank each one and all of you for the wonderful job
12 that you are doing on behalf of our young people.
13 And I want to thank also the representative from
14 DYCD, a wonderful institution doing an outstanding
15 job, you know, providing to our young people the
16 resources that they need to become positive and
17 proactive citizens.

18 And you all know that our young people
19 there are the future of this society, the City of New
20 York City and also they are the future doctors,
21 nurses, teachers; elected officials and they will
22 become the positive and proactive citizens if only,
23 if only we come together to provide them with the
24 best opportunity that they need to become the leaders
25 of tomorrow, and if we fail to do that, there will be

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2 candidates also to increase the population of the
3 people who are in jail, the population of the people
4 who are also in the street, the homeless people. But
5 I do believe and I have faith that we are going to
6 continue to work together to make our young people
7 the best city of tomorrow.

8 Again, thank you to all of you and as the
9 new chair of the Youth Committee, I want to let you
10 know that I'm looking for partners and I know that
11 all of you will be my partners, because we have a
12 remarkable job to do and I do believe that we can do
13 it, because I see so many faces, so many people in
14 this audience, in the room and I know that they have
15 been working hard, they have been doing a wonderful
16 job and myself, I was on the other side also; I've
17 created a non-profit organization in my community, in
18 my district to work with the young people and I know
19 firsthand; if we give to our young people the right
20 opportunities, we can deter them from the negative
21 paths and send them to do reward of successes and
22 powerment, so let's get busy.

23 So again, I see some commissioners and
24 representatives from the DYCD, thank you for being
25 here. So we're going to... [background comment] to

call the first panel, even though you are already here. We have in the first... for the first panel, Alan Cheng, Assistant Commissioner and Andre White from DYCD. Thank you very much and you may start anytime.

ALAN CHENG: Thank you. Good afternoon Chairman Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. I'm Alan Cheng, Assistant Commissioner for Youth Workforce Development at the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, or DYCD. Joining me is Andre White, who's the Director of the Summer Youth Employment Program. On behalf of our Commissioner, Bill Chong, I thank you for focusing on the Summer Youth Employment Program as the first topic of the Committee for this new legislative session.

For the benefit of new Committee members we would like to provide some background on SYEP.

DYCD has administered the program since 2003, when the Council and the previous administration moved responsibility for Youth Employment Services and Programs to DYCD. Since then DYCD has made significant improvements to SYEP in order to expand the ways in which youth could benefit

from their work experience. The most significant innovations include: Educational Components -- SYEP now includes mandatory educational components that compliment the work experience and help young people prepare for the workplace. SYEP participants take part in educational activities that cover topics such as workplace readiness, financial literacy, health education, higher education and career exploration; Vulnerable Youth -- DYCD recognizes the needs of vulnerable youth through separate contracts with providers who specialize in services for runaway homeless, justice-involved, foster care and youth and families receiving preventative services from ACS; Private Sector Jobs -- DYCD encourages providers to place youth in private sector jobs in order to expose SYEP participants to a diversity of real labor experiences; Debit Cards -- Participants are paid electronically via debit cards to help them become more accustomed to managing their own finances and provide a safe and convenient way to access their money. The cards can also be used at any store that accepts debit cards, allowing money to be spent directly in their community; Relationships with Local Banks -- Partnerships with local banks allow

participants to access money at branch locations without incurring an ATM fee and provide the ability to open free checking accounts, initiate direct deposit of their summer earnings; finally, Improve use of Technology -- DYCD actively implements technology initiative that maximize participant services, prevents fraud and streamlines agency operations. This includes online participant in worksite applications, a centralized payroll system that are more efficient than the labor-intensive paper-driven predecessors, and SYEP has also adapted wireless monitoring, allowing us to improve our quality assurance systems.

I will now turn it over to Andre White, who will highlight last summer's successes and explain the four new SYEP service options.

ANDRE WHITE: Service option one -- younger youth, ages 14-15. SYEP's critical for younger youth because it's likely to be their first experience in the working world. Younger youth need opportunities to succeed in the workplace, such as written and oral communication, critical thinking and professionalism. The weekly program includes 15 hours of work experience and 5 hours of educational

workshops paid at the minimum wage. Work assignments include participation in service learning, community service and other age-appropriate placement.

Service option two -- older youth, ages 16-24. Older youth may have already had prior work experience through SYEP or other employment. Orientation and training takes place before the start of employment and older youth are more readily matched with job placements that reflect their experiences and interests.

Service option three -- vulnerable youth, ages 14-24. DYCD identifies vulnerable youth employment barriers as runaway homeless, justice-involved, youth in or aging under foster care and families receiving preventive services through ACS. Youth receive 25 hours of paid weekly work experience, along with mentoring, counseling and referral to other support services.

Service option four -- unsubsidized jobs for older youth. New York City Ladders for Leaders, ages 16 through 24. In this option, which was launched in October 2007, participants receive intensive pre-employment training before starting an employer-sponsored internship. Services of qualified

youth of prior work experience compete for unsubsidized jobs they are not yet positioned to secure on their own. The program helps youth transition into the world of work by giving them the opportunity to actively test their career mapping, job seeking and networking skills.

In 2013 135,388 youth applied to SYEP and NYC was able to provide 35,957 jobs. Our total budget was \$45.6 million; this included \$20.6 million in city tax levy, \$13.7 million in state funds, \$9.1 million in federal funds and \$2.2 million in private donations through the Mayor's fund. Of the young people served, 56 percent were females and 44 percent were male; 37 percent from Brooklyn, 25 percent from the Bronx, 21 percent from Queens, 12 percent from Manhattan and 5 percent from Staten Island.

Demographically, 44.2 percent identified as African-American, 27.4 percent as Latino, 13.6 as white, and 8.3 percent as Asian. This included 2,457 youth who identified themselves as having a disability, 6,833 worksites were developed in partnership with our 50 SYEP providers, 31.5 percent were at day camps, 12 percent were in government, 11.3 percent were in social services and 7.8 were in health care. Twenty-

seven percent of worksites were in the private sector, representing an array of employers, such as A&E Stores, Barnes & Noble, CVS and Walgreen's, just to name a few. In our experience, employers use SYEP as a training ground to recruit new candidates for potential full-time and part-time jobs.

SYEP participants also helped with recovery projects after Superstorm Sandy, including the removal of 13,000 pounds of debris from the shorelines of Brooklyn, the Rockaways and Staten Island.

SYEP participants also earned \$31.1 million in wages, providing a direct economic stimulus to distressed communities across the city.

On Tuesday, January 28th, Commissioner Cheng and I traveled to Albany to join over 300 youth representing community-based organizations from the city to participate in Youth Action Day; we met with the legislators and rallied for an additional \$7.5 million in state support for SYEP to ensure 3,700 slots are not lost due to the increase in minimum wage. We spoke to over 20 key legislators, including Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Member Donna Lupardo, Chair of the Committee on Children and

Families and other members, staff from the Assembly Ways and Means, as well as the Senate Finance Committees. We appreciate the Council's support in this regard. We estimate that nearly 20,000 youth can be served with our current budget of \$37.5 million.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to discuss SYEP. We appreciate your commitment to SYEP and your advocacy on behalf of New York City's youth. We are now happy to answer your questions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much to both of you for your testimony. When we talk about the Summer Youth Program, I know that there's a RFP, request for proposal, and we know that responding to a RFP can be a very complicated process and difficult process, especially for certain grassroots organizations, small grassroots organization that would like to be part of the providers. What do you have in place to help the small non-profit organizations comply with the requirement of the RFP? Do you have any system in place to help them respond to the RFP?

ALAN CHENG: So I'm not with the procurement office, but I can give you some general

1 things that we do do. We obviously have a variety of
2 types of contracts that DYCD procures; some are small
3 and some are large, like SYEP and other programs, and
4 we provide plenty of tactical assistance; we do a lot
5 of meetings in advance of RFPs to basically... once we
6 put it out there, we put it out there as a concept
7 paper for folks to provide feedback on; then we hold
8 a number of hearings and meetings to brief people on
9 what the requirements are of the RFP; we provide TA
10 throughout the year and I don't know the schedule
11 exactly, but to help folks along with, you know, what
12 kind of capacity issues they need to address, what
13 kind of skill sets or knowledge base they need to
14 have in order to compete properly for RFPs, and we
15 have a very strong and activity capacity-building
16 unit that helps not only funded agencies, but also
17 other agencies that are doing work within our realm
18 of youth services.

20 With SYEP, in particular, it is tough,
21 because it's a large program; happens pretty quickly;
22 we need people on the ground who know how to get this
23 program up and running in a very short amount of
24 time. What we usually... I mean we've had turnover in
25 providers, we've seen providers who start out very

1 small who ended up ultimately taking on bigger
2 contracts and one of the best ways for them to start
3 getting some of that experience with SYEP is to start
4 out as a partner with a larger organization, whether
5 they're providing subcontracting services or whether
6 they operate as a worksite for an existing provider,
7 so that they can get their feet wet, so to say, and
8 have that experience working with young people in the
9 summer and employing them.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And can you tell us
12 about the qualifications of those organizations they
13 are picking, you know, for the contract; what are the
14 qualifications for them to be qualified; what are the
15 requirements for them to be qualified to be providers
16 of this program?

17 ALAN CHENG: So for somebody for
18 employment program it's pretty specifically;
19 obviously we need... we're looking for folks who have a
20 balance of youth development qualifications, as well
21 as employment, knowing where to partner with
22 potential employers; I guess, preparing young people
23 for the workplace, so knowledge of teaching them
24 workplace skills, work readiness skills, some of the
25 workshops that we talked about earlier -- financial

1 literacy, things like that. But most importantly we
2 want them to know, to understand youth development
3 principles that we embrace; mainly, you know,
4 recognizing that there are different levels and
5 needs, depending on the age, the development; the
6 experience of young people. And they have to have a
7 demonstrated history of, you know, providing services
8 to young people. So those are the basis
9 requirements, if I wanted to summarize.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. More
12 questions for both of you, but before I continue I
13 would like recognize Council Member King.
14 [background comments] You have to leave?
15 [background comment] Okay. Because they have also
16 other hearing to attend to. [background comments]
17 Which one would like to go first? [background
18 comment] Council Member King, right? [background
19 comment] Thank you very much.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good afternoon and
21 thank you for your testimony, thank you Mr. Chair;
22 it's a... [interpose]

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: pleasure to serve
25 with you and we're lookin' forward to doing a lot of

1 good things when it comes to our young people, our
2 next generation of leaders; I'm inspired. When I
3 even look out in the group here and I see people,
4 younger than me, that I know that there is hope for
5 tomorrow. But when we talk about the Summer Youth
6 Employment Program, I do have one or two questions... I
7 was listening to your testimony and I just wanna go
8 back about your service options about younger youth
9 adults, knowing that this is pretty much their first
10 experience getting out and taking on a little bit
11 more responsibility. So I just wanted to know; can
12 you tell us a little bit about some of the projects
13 that these young adults have accomplished in their
14 first tenure of being part of SYEP?

16 ANDRE WHITE: So as I mentioned in my
17 testimony, this was the first year we actually
18 implemented this model around the younger youth,
19 young people, focusing primarily on community service
20 and service learning, workplace learning and I must
21 tell you, it was a very successful year for the young
22 people, we saw an array of projects across New York
23 City; to talk about a few, up in Harlem, New York
24 City Mission, they had young people working on the
25 registration drivers; you know, it was, you know,

1 right before the election, so young people were
2 actually walking in the community, trying to educate
3 folks about the importance of voting, actually
4 handing out registration to vote; they could actually
5 come to New York City Mission to sign up for that.

6
7 In the Bronx we worked with the
8 Bronxworks and this was a real interesting project
9 where young people actually were exposed to the
10 farmer's market and working in the existing
11 organization and they actually worked with a gardener
12 and basically planted, you know fruits and vegetables
13 and they actually took that to the farmer's market to
14 actually sell that.

15 When we think about Brooklyn, Sandy-
16 related projects, Staten Island, the Rockaways, we
17 had a number of young people engaged in the beach
18 cleanup activity. And of course, the important piece
19 about the younger youth is, you wanna make sure that
20 they have the theoretical and the practical
21 experience; as you said, they are very green, right;
22 they don't have the essential skills to actually
23 necessarily succeed in the workplace, so during the
24 summer there's a 5-hour educational component that's
25 attached to that. So after they go to their actual

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2 placement, whether it's a service learning or
3 community service learning project, then they have a
4 discussion about what did we learn, you know what are
5 the benefits of what we did tactually applied level
6 as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Do they get paid
8 for this training at the same time?

9 ANDRE WHITE: Yes, they do.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay. Also, in
11 your testimony or overview you talked about in 2013
12 there was 135,388 applicants; however, there's only
13 35,957 jobs; leaves roughly around 99,000 youth out
14 there, so what happens to them?

15 ALAN CHENG: Well obviously if they're
16 not in the program we don't really keep track of
17 them, but we do let young people know through our
18 Youth Connect, not program, but group, about other
19 opportunities that are out there; we have something
20 posted on our website about, you know, other jobs
21 outside of SYEP that might be available. We also..
22 you know, we also hear that a lot of them go to
23 summer school, some of them do turn the job, so when
24 we're talking about getting from 135,000 to about
25 36,000 young people working, there's some turnover in

1
2 that too, so some people we might have selected, you
3 know, maybe double that amount of people, but some
4 had to turn down for one reason or another, maybe
5 they found their own job, for the lucky ones, and
6 some who had summer school schedules or other plans
7 that prevented them from taking part of the Summer
8 Youth Program.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Is there a way..
10 taking all those variables into consideration, that
11 those who were still left out there in search of, is
12 there a way to do another wave of finding where they
13 are, maybe two or three weeks after you start to find
14 out, you know, as you say, some have summer school,
15 some have found new jobs, recycling your list again
16 to see, can we engage these students or these youth
17 again as opposed to just saying, hope they're doing
18 okay this summer?

19 ALAN CHENG: That's something that we
20 would love to do; obviously... you know everything can
21 be done with more time and more money, right, so... I
22 mean we have the time, but we don't necessarily have
23 the resources; we were devoting all of our resources,
24 as you can tell, just to get as many people employed,
25 so you know, really we don't have the resources to do

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2 it. We could probably do a survey, but that would
3 require resources to figure out where the young
4 people are and then follow up with them. That's some
5 that we would love to do if we were given the
6 resources.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I'm gonna
8 guesstimate here, okay; we said about 99,000 got left
9 out; let's just say there is only 20,000; is there a
10 way possibly to engage... and I'm... actually I'm just
11 gonna ask a question, but I was taught if you have a
12 question, maybe you have a solution at the same time.
13 Is there a way to partner up with the DOE to figure
14 out how... I have a youth group also that I spend a lot
15 of time and one of the main things that I educate
16 young people in is creating your own opportunities
17 and one of the best ways to create your own
18 opportunity is by volunteering. Is there a way with
19 DOE that these jobs, that jobs can be created that...
20 because we don't have the funding to pay everybody,
21 but givin' them the everlasting payment by allowing
22 them to earn some type of education credits in their
23 school by volunteering for the summer working at SAKS
24 [phonetic] or volunteering at the Council or
25 volunteering somewhere in the school as opposed to

1 because we just can't pay you, but you know what;
2 you'll still be able to get community service credit
3 or you know, you work in the Council; you'll get a
4 political science or history credit or something like
5 that; is there a way to come up with a system so
6 students are still not out there on the streets,
7 because if they don't get employed, they still... you
8 know, idle time, you know, mischief behavior creeps
9 in. So is there a way to connect with the DOE to
10 figure out... you know, to give us other options for
11 those students we can't financially fund throughout
12 the summer?

14 ALAN CHENG: I don't wanna say no until
15 we've tried, but that's definitely worth trying; I
16 think that some of it, you know as you mentioned,
17 getting credits and those things, that has to be
18 coming from DOE, so you know, we would have to
19 obviously get their buy-in into doing that, but that
20 sounds like a great idea.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I'd be willing to
22 join any conversation that will help our young
23 people... you know, someone gave it to us, so it's time
24 to figure out how do we give it back to them. So I
25 just... that's all I want to really ask, but I just

wanna welcome you again and thank you; I'm looking forward to getting a lot of good things done over year. Thank you Mr. Chair and congratulations again.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Council Member King. Thank you. Now I want to recognize Council Member Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair; I am also... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: a pleasure serving on this committee with you; in the past I usually come when budget time to sit in, but I'm really glad that I was appointed to this committee.

The Summer Youth Program has a very special place in my heart, 'cause when I was a teenager, long, long time ago, I benefited from the Summer Youth Program, and I think a lot of the kids this day... it is really sad to see that they can't participate in this program because we don't have the resources. I mean looking at the number that you presented, I mean almost 100,000 kids that applied did not get an opportunity and I, also you know, support what Council Member King is saying, is that we've gotta find some other way; I mean, doing a

1 survey, finding out what happened to these kids would
2 be great; we should see how we can do that, 'cause
3 what are these kids doing during the summer? The
4 other thing is that yeah, setting up some volunteer
5 program where they can get community service credit
6 or something for them to really participate in. But
7 for the kids who have the opportunity, 'cause right
8 now the system, when you're talking about... you know,
9 you have so many different categories, and vulnerable
10 population, there are kids who probably... because this
11 is on the... because it's a lottery system, right;
12 there are kids who might really need a job in the
13 summer to help out their family; if they don't win
14 that lottery they lost out of the opportunity. So I
15 think that's something we really need to revisit to
16 see if there are ways to really have programs to help
17 kids who are really in need and not go through a
18 lottery system. I mean, in the old days I don't
19 think we had to go through a lottery system and a lot
20 of the low-income kids... I guess maybe I'm older... a
21 lot of the low-income kids had the opportunity, so
22 that's something I think we really need to look at
23 the resource question. And I'm really concerned; in
24 your testimony you're only talking about right now
25

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2 the current budget is only \$37.5 million and you're
3 only gonna be able to serve 28,000 kids? That's
4 almost 8,000 less than what you were able to serve
5 last year. So what's the administration plan in
6 terms of at least minimum, keeping the same number
7 you had last year and I'm looking forward to really
8 trying to expand the number. I know you went to
9 Albany and you lobbied, but I mean why are we... why
10 are you presenting a smaller amount of budget? And
11 what's the projection for really increasing that?

12 ALAN CHENG: I'll address the budget, but
13 I just wanted to talk a little bit about the lottery...
14 going back to your lottery comment. So just so you
15 also know; the committee knows that the vulnerable
16 youth option is not subject to a lottery. So that's
17 actually folks who are referred from one of our city
18 partners, ACS... what is it, the... [background comment]
19 OCFS, probations and juvenile justice, and those
20 young people are referred to these providers as
21 needing a job, ready to work and you know, can
22 benefit from an employment program. So that's
23 something I just wanted to put out there. And also,
24 we put... you know we use the lottery... I... I mean I grew
25 up in New York City too, so I applied for the Summer

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2 Jobs Program when I was a teenager and I could tell
3 you that I applied three times and never got in
4 [laughter] and it was because you kinda had to know
5 somebody or you had to be the first one in line or
6 something like that and I lived far out in Queens
7 somewhere; couldn't get to the city quickly enough.
8 But doing the lottery is about equity, you know, so
9 it gives everybody a chance who wants to work, who
10 puts in an application, a chance to basically win a
11 job. So that's why we do the lottery. We recognize
12 definitely there are some people who do need the work
13 experience and that's why we set aside, like the
14 vulnerable youth option.

15 As far as the budget goes -- so obviously
16 we've already... I think the Chair also touched upon it
17 -- there's a minimum wage increase that hit us in
18 January; that's one of the reasons why we're serving
19 less folks, or projecting to serve less folks based
20 on this. But you've also probably picked up that the
21 budget is lower; it went from \$46.2 million to what
22 we're projecting, \$37.5. Some of that has to do with
23 one-time funding that was available last year...
24 actually, all of it, the different really comes from
25 one-time funding we had, some private donations the

1 last few years in the program; last year over \$2
2 million from private donors. And we also had some
3 one-time state funding that was available that we
4 have not received for this year yet, so we're
5 waiting; you know, while we're up in Albany we're...
6 you know a lot of it resides with the state, but to
7 make up for the minimum wage is something that I
8 think everybody is asking for, not just us here, but
9 I'm sure some of the other panels that are coming up
10 are talking about the same thing. We are hoping to
11 see if we can get the additional resources, not just
12 from the state, but from other folks as well to make
13 up the difference so that the minimum wage impact will
14 be minimized. And where our goal is to get to at
15 least the numbers that we served last year; if we can
16 get further than that, that'd be great. [background
17 comments] And I think that kind of, I think, address
18 the budget difference.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well I hope you do
21 that; I mean I hope that the goal, minimally, has to
22 be what you served last year and we hope to see, you
23 know more of that and that's the goal that you should
24 set. So I think in your testimony, I didn't hear
25 that and I wanted to make sure that you'll bring back

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2 to the commissioner that with the SYEP we have to
3 increase the number every year going forward; we
4 cannot go back. I mean that... that's the important
5 message that we have to send. And I think that, you
6 know the... the vulnerable youth population, you know
7 it's good that we do, you know set aside, but I think
8 also there are possibility of expanding that and
9 allowing some of the local organizations who work
10 with kids, with families who are in great need so
11 then they also will be able to have an opportunity to
12 work during the summer to get the experience to
13 support their families. So I think that's something
14 that I am looking for. Thank you, Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you Council
16 Member Chin. Now let me acknowledge that we have
17 been joined also by Council Member Chaim Deutsch and
18 also Council Member Laurie Cumbo. And I think that
19 Council Member Deutsch has some questions. But
20 before I go to... before I give you the opportunity to
21 ask your question, let me ask one thing. We know
22 that you know the Summer Youth Program was possible
23 or is possible because of the partnership of the
24 city, state and private sectors and we know that
25 there are some cuts from the city and state funding

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2 and also because of the increase of the minimum wage
3 we are going to see the loss of certain slots. But
4 what effort has been done to increase the number of
5 private partners to bring you know more corporate
6 organizations in the program, because we know from
7 the government we have cuts and we are going to see
8 less slots; is there any effort that you have been
9 doing to invite other private corporations to be part
10 of this wonderful, wonderful program?

11 ALAN CHENG: So the last four or five
12 years we've actually partnered with the Mayor's Fund
13 to Advance the City and we were able to raise as much
14 as, I believe one year it was \$6 million and the last
15 few years, like \$2-3 million each summer. So that's
16 something that we are willing to commit to again and
17 we're looking forward to working with the Mayor's
18 Fund again to start up again a campaign to basically
19 fundraise from the private sector for Summer Youth
20 Employment Program specifically.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
22 Council Member Deutsch.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, thank
24 you, Chair. Thank you, Chair.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: 'Kay, I think everyone can hear me now.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome.
[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you.
First I wanna echo the words of my colleagues; when you talk about approximately 100,000 children that are, you know, out in the street during the summer, it's a problem. I'm on the Education Committee on public schools; I am there for every single child in the City of New York and during my campaign I made it my business to go out in the parks to look for those teenagers who are sitting out there not knowing what they're doing for the summer, just hanging out in the streets. When we talk about putting money into education, we have to look at how much money we're putting into the summer programs, because we need to keep our children occupied during the summer months, 'cause if we don't do that, no matter how much money we put into our education department, right, we're still gonna fall behind. So number one is that we need to come out with a plan... to come up with a plan of what happens to these 100,000 kids that are out there in the streets. So we have to have some type

1 of accountability of what these children are doing;
2 that's number one. And number two is that when it
3 comes to a lottery, you know if I wanna go out and
4 buy a lottery ticket and lose, that's my option, but
5 to do a lottery and then, you know, have the children
6 go through the lottery and then when you lose the
7 lottery, you feel like you're a loser and I think we
8 have to find another option to give to our children
9 to build their self-esteem and to make sure that our
10 children are treated like you said, equally, but in a
11 different way and I think one way is to work
12 together, to work along with my colleagues to make
13 sure we have enough money into our Summer Youth
14 Programs, because I know you cannot do this alone;
15 you need all... you know, you need the members of the
16 City Council, I understand that, and I think we have
17 to have a better open line of communication of what
18 the needs are, how to go about it and how to have
19 accountability for every single child that needs a
20 place to go, who needs a place to be in the summer,
21 'cause I think that is very crucial to our children,
22 to our future and to our children's education. So
23 that's not a question, that's something that I would
24 like to ask the assistant commissioner to please get
25

back to us and to let us know... give us a plan, give us some idea of the work you do and what you think you need from us and we'll let you know what we need from you. But I think the bottom line is; we need accountability; we need to know what's going on with our children during the summer months; we need to keep them busy and occupied. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Council Member Deutsch. Thank you. So you mentioned vulnerable youth and we know that those young people they are facing many challenges and they have special needs; what do you have in place to help them overcome their challenges and to make sure they benefit from the Summer Youth Program?

ANDRE WHITE: So with the vulnerable youth option, as Alan alluded to before, we work specifically with a number of city agencies as partners and these city agencies are working with various non-profits throughout the different communities. So when these young people are referred to DYCD from our city agency partners, they're coming from the CBOs who are working directly with these young people or they are in the foster care system, they're runaway homeless; they're receiving

1 preventive services through ACS. We have monthly
2 meetings with what we call our VUI providers and we
3 bring in various partners, right? We ensure that
4 there is some sort of case management and support
5 services that are offered for these young people;
6 throughout the program every single week they get to
7 talk to a social worker for their issues; our
8 providers are going into the field to make sure that
9 they're having a meaningful summer jobs experience;
10 we wanna make sure if they need referral services
11 around... whether it's housing; whatever the issues
12 might be; we are there to provide that sort of
13 information to them. Because this is a very
14 difficult population, we wanna make sure that the
15 resources that we provide are readily available and I
16 think we do a really good job to provide that for
17 them.
18

19 Another thing I wanna add, on the VUI
20 component we have a number of partnerships with
21 various, as I mentioned in my testimony, various
22 groups; you know, Walgreen's; CVS and these companies
23 have actually used some of our interns as a training
24 ground for SYEP, particularly some of the VUI
25 participants, and at the end of the summer they do

recognize they might need some sort of, you know job, so they offer them some sort of full-time or part-time employment after the summer ends. So we're looking beyond the six weeks when it comes down to our VUI participants as well.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Let me acknowledge that we have been joined by Council Member Darlene Mealy, member of the Committee also. And I want to call Council Member Laurie Cumbo for some questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good afternoon; thank you very much for your testimony. I wanted to ask... so it looks like maybe 1 in 4 that apply for this program; would you say that's somewhere in the accurate actually receive this particular opportunity? What happens actually to those other 3 out of that apply every year; what happens to those young people that apply for that program?

ALAN CHENG: So yeah, Council Member King kind of asked the same question earlier, but... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh I apologize.

ALAN CHENG: but that's fine; I know you... so we don't... you know, we obviously can only keep

1 track of the ones who are in our program, but I was
2 telling the council member earlier, the committee
3 earlier, that we run a lottery and while we get from
4 135,000 to 136,000 people, a lot goes on between
5 that... there's actually a lot more people who are
6 selected than the 35 or 36,000 people who actually
7 work; there are those who get selected and they don't
8 wanna work for one reason or another... [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

11 ALAN CHENG: you know either they already
12 found their own job -- for the lucky ones -- and for
13 those who have maybe like conflicting school
14 schedules, summer school schedules or already might
15 have other plans; they don't wanna work for some
16 reason after they've applied. So it actually is a
17 smaller number than 100,000, but beyond that, what we
18 do as an agency is that we communicate with all of
19 our young people other opportunities that might be
20 available, whether they're paid or unpaid
21 opportunities, and you know, where it's up to the
22 young people to either take advantage of it or not;
23 we don't physically keep track of those who don't get
24 into the program.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Has there been any efforts to attempt to reach out to the private sector to match the difference in where the resources have not been made up in that way?

ALAN CHENG: Yeah, we've been doin' that the last 4 to 5 years... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

ALAN CHENG: we're working with the Mayor's Fund to Advance the City... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay; that's excellent.

ALAN CHENG: and we've raised as much as \$6 million; in the last few years \$2-3 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And are there other partnerships in terms of more corporate or private sector in that way in terms of the different corporations that are relocating to New York City; that are already in existence here? I see some of the banks that are utilized here for the young people to go utilize their debit cards in order to get paid; have those banks potentially been utilized as potential partners that would... because they are benefiting from this opportunity as well, it would be

great if they could provide opportunities in terms of support and sponsorship for this program.

ALAN CHENG: Yep, definitely; we've reached out to all the banks and a few of the banks, the bigger banks have taken on one... you know our interns... I can name Chase; we've had young people work at Chase, Bank of America, at some of the smaller banks, like New York Community Bank...

[interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: In terms of them accepting young people into the program?

ALAN CHENG: In terms of them employing them and in many cases paying them actually out of their own pockets.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh that's fantastic. Now one of the things that I wanted to add; when I was on the campaign trail, one of the things that we did, we actually created a Summer Youth Guide and what it was, was it an opportunity for young people and their families to understand all of the different anemities [phonetic] that are happening in the area during the summer months so that whether they are part of the Summer Youth Program or they're part of another program, this

1 would give them an opportunity to really realize all
2 of the opportunities that exist in New York City and
3 while it's a huge task or undertaking for an
4 individual council member to do, I feel like it would
5 be great if your agency or your partners could work
6 on potentially doing one that's borough-wide, where
7 everything from every single summer camp, every
8 cultural institution, cultural programs that are
9 involved would be really fantastic so that way we
10 could provide young people with opportunities,
11 because particularly over this summer, it's such a
12 correlation, I believe, in terms of the number of
13 shootings that happen in our communities and the lack
14 of resources that are provided to those communities
15 and I feel very strongly that if a Summer Youth
16 Program could, in an ideal world, and I think this is
17 something we should all push for, is that every
18 single young person that exhibits the energy, the
19 desire and the will to have a summer youth job should
20 certainly be given all of the opportunities to
21 benefits in that way. And I would also add, I'm sure
22 myself and many other council members, in terms of
23 the training that the young people receive, it would
24 be wonderful as council members if we could stop in,

1
2 if we could participate, if we could lend our
3 expertise or some of the experiences to how we got to
4 where we are I think would also be helpful for the
5 young people to have that level of expertise as well.

6 ALAN CHENG: We definitely welcome your
7 partnership and we share the same goal. I mean we
8 wanna make sure that every young person who wants to
9 do something during the summer gets a chance to do
10 something. To that end, I wanted to show you -- we
11 actually have been publishing for a number of years a
12 Summer Fund Guide... [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uhm-hm.

14 ALAN CHENG: we call it, which actually
15 highlights week by week, by borough, all the
16 different free activities or low-cost activities that
17 are available to young people, whether they're camps,
18 whether they're, like I said, cultural activities and
19 things like that. We publish that and we put it out
20 there on our website; it's searchable by day, by
21 whatever it is, and we do it every year. So that's
22 available on a city-wide level... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: When will it be
24 available for this year, for the summertime coming
25 up?

[background comment]

ALAN CHENG: In the begin... beginning
July; late June.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Now let me tell
you something; I think that's fantastic, but I also
know that so many people start to plan for their
summer camps and opportunities and the waiting list
starts to happen like in April, so maybe if there
could be some way that it could come out a bit
earlier, particularly for summer camps, less so for
events, but definitely for a lot of the summer camps
in the areas; I know their slots run out very
quickly.

ALAN CHENG: Definitely; we'll look into
that.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much
Council Member Cumbo. Let me ask you another
question about youth. You mentioned vulnerable
youth; what about youth with disabilities?

ANDRE WHITE: We do serve young people
with disabilities; last year we served over 2,000
young folks; again, when we're developing worksites
we take into account what the disabilities are; we

1
2 wanna make sure that they're having a productive
3 summer as well. We have a number of providers who
4 serve specifically those young people and just to
5 add, those young people are actually chosen through a
6 separate lottery process.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So because of their
8 disabilities, do you have support services for them
9 also... [crosstalk]

10 ANDRE WHITE: Yeah...

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: to make sure that,
12 you know they can enjoy the Summer Youth Program and
13 they can be prepared to take the full advantage of
14 this program?

15 ANDRE WHITE: Absolutely. So when there
16 are young people coming to their providers for
17 enrollment, which typically take place in June or
18 July, that's when they sit with them and find out
19 exactly what their needs are and we do some sort of
20 assessment. So it's at that point we recognize
21 whatever issues they might have, whether it's a
22 physical disability or mental disability, we wanna
23 cater towards whatever their needs are and make sure
24 that placement is appropriate for them.
25

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We know that certain young people that may have to travel from home to the site of the program; do you have transportation services available and how does it work?

ANDRE WHITE: Unfortunately we not provide transportation services for work participants, unfortunately the budget doesn't lend us to do that, but historically we did offer transportation passes to groups, you know if they're going on trips or they're going on events, but to actually give each particular student a metro card, we don't do that.

ALAN CHENG: And I mean, that's also one of the reasons why we work with so many different community-based organizations; we wanna keep... you know we understand that young people may not necessarily wanna leave their communities, travel... take... you know, do what we do, which is you know, do like three transfers and two fares or whatever it is to get to wherever they need to get to, so a lot of our community-based organizations, they primarily work with young people from their communities and the worksites that they develop are within their communities so that they can easily get to them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Does that mean that all the young people in the Summer Youth Program attend a Summer Youth Program in their neighborhood; they don't have to travel, none of them?

ALAN CHENG: They don't have to; some of them do, you know some of them who are older who wanna work... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I'm talking about those who have to.

ALAN CHENG: Those... nobody has to, you know, everybody can find a program that's relatively easy to get to, but in terms of work, you know, we have some... like I said, there are young... as many young people as there who wanna stay in their communities, there's a lot who also wanna venture out, they wanna come out to Manhattan where it's happening, so they wanna come out here to work. And that's fine; we don't stop them. Our partners also develop worksites throughout, you know, so they don't... if they're a Brooklyn organization, they may not just have sites in Brooklyn; they might develop job opportunities in Manhattan and other places so that young people can take advantage of that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, but I think that we don't have... DYCD, or the program doesn't have jobs for all the applicants, so it may happen that some of the young people may be accepted in a program that is not located in his neighborhood, so that means that young people would have to travel...

[crosstalk]

ALAN CHENG: Oh, I see what you're saying... okay. No, so when the young person applies, they actually select the neighborhood where they wanna apply and the community organization that they wanna... so they do that first before we even run the lottery and they can only pick one place. So that's how they control where, you know, they end up. So somebody who's like you know in Far Rockaway is not going to apply and then be selected for a program in the Bronx, in Northern Bronx, you know; they'll never get there, right. So they're picking something that's in the Rockaways or they're picking something that's in the Bronx first, before we run the lottery.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So in terms of your outreach system; how do you reach out to young people, because what happens in the City of New York, we may have a wonderful program, but because the

1
2 people don't know [background comment] about the
3 existence of those programs, they cannot take
4 advantage of; how do you reach out to the young
5 people, the parents, to let them know that we have a
6 wonderful summer program; we want the young people to
7 be involved; what is your technique to reach out to
8 young people?

9 ALAN CHENG: So we have to juggle that
10 with trying to spend almost no money on marketing
11 because we wanna direct it all towards the program,
12 but we do a good job of it because we work closely
13 with the schools; a lot of our young people find out
14 about it from school, through their guidance
15 counselors or the parent coordinators. [background
16 comments] We also have a huge social media presence,
17 so we send out alerts through Facebook, through
18 Twitter; you know, we also send out emails reminding
19 all those people who applied in previous years were
20 still eligible, you know; that hey, the time is here
21 again; applications are available. So and we've done
22 PSAs and we do press releases and we have posters
23 that we send out to a lot of different folks.

24 [background comments]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I've got another question related to youth with disabilities. What is the percentage, approximately, of youth with disabilities that are involved in the program?

ALAN CHENG: I think we gave you an actual number; what was it? [background comment]

ANDRE WHITE: We enrolled 2,547 young people who identified... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Two thousand five...

ANDRE WHITE: I wanna say... let me give you the... I wanna say 2,000... [interpose, background comment] 2,457.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 2,400... [crosstalk]

ANDRE WHITE: 457, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 457. Okay. But in term of the... you say that you don't keep the record of those young people who are not part of the program, but what about those young people who went through the program or who attended the program; do you have the record; do you know what... what is the impact of the experience in the youth summer program on their education; does that motivate them to go to school, to stay in school or does the experience keep

1
2 them out of school? What is the impact of the Summer
3 Youth Program on our young people?

4 ALAN CHENG: So it's... I'm glad you asked
5 that question only because... I mentioned before that
6 we don't have money to do research, but we were able
7 to, a couple years ago, be approached, or actually
8 work with NYU, the Wagner School, and they actually
9 did a free research for us on exactly what you just
10 talked about, which is what is the impact of summer
11 youth employment for those who got into the program,
12 in terms of their educational outcomes; you know, did
13 they go back to school; did they attend school more;
14 did they do better? And we were pleased to say they
15 looked at one full year of the year 2007, when we
16 served, I think well over 40,000 young people and we
17 had about 100,000 or so young people apply and they
18 were able to find out that there was a positive
19 correlation with their participation in the Summer
20 Youth Employment Program. They were able to find
21 that their attendance increased; in some cases by a
22 week or more the following school year, so we're
23 talking about... they were looking at young people who
24 finished, let's say the Summer Youth Employment
25 Program in August, the semester immediately after, or

the semester beginning in that September, that their attendance increased as much as a week compared to those who did not work during the summer. We also found out that they were more likely to take Regents exams, Math and English Regents exams, and thereby also pass them. So there were a lot of things and we could share that summary report with you, if you don't have that. But that was something that was published by the NYU Wagner School.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. I want to recognize Council Member Mealy to ask a few questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I just have one. I wanna thank our chair. Just a piggyback on his question with the disability. Out of the 2,000, what percentage of the disability got the job?
[background comments]

ANDRE WHITE: I'm sorry; can you repeat the question?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How many applied for the 2,000 slots...

ANDRE WHITE: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: and what percentage did get the jobs... [crosstalk]

ANDRE WHITE: Right...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: do you have a
breakdown on that?

ANDRE WHITE: Yeah, we do have a
breakdown; unfortunately I just don't have the number
of young people who checked off, you know, who under
ID on their application, but we could run the report
and get back to you with that information.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So you are keepin'
a database in regards to this... [crosstalk]

ANDRE WHITE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: kinda information?

ANDRE WHITE: Absolutely, we track all of
our young people enrolled in the program, yes.
[interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay; I would love
to have that information, Chair. [music]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Will you please
forward this information to our office?

ALAN CHENG: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. Let me
call on Council Member Deutsch.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, Chair
once again... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I first... I just wanna say that I am not on the Youth Committee, okay; it's not one of my committees, but I'm here this morning, this afternoon, but I just wanna say that I feel... how... how... I feel it's important that you have over 40 committees and subcommittees in the City Council and I believe it all starts on this committee, so I'm a little jealous of our chair, he has a great committee [laugh] it's a very important committee and I just wanna give you, Commissioner, that you have a very good reputation out there; I see some of my people that do administration from the Summer Youth Programs; think the coach out of Flatbush is one of them and I see a few others, but I just wanna tell you; you have my full support, so if there's anything you need, you call me up anytime, 24 hours a day, I'll make time for the youth, for our children and I'm looking forward to working with our chair to whatever needs that he may need from myself at the City Council. But this is a message for all my colleagues and for the state, that since everything starts with our youths, that it's important to make sure that no child is left behind,

so I wanna thank you for having me here and I look forward to working with all of you and with our children to making sure that we all get accounted for. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you Council Member Deutsch, but before you go, by the power... by the power invested on me as a chair, I wanna give you all the right and privileges of the member of the Youth Committee. [laughter] Thank you very much. Thank you. Now uh... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I've got a... I have a meeting with Coke.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I want to recognize Council Member Cumbo for some questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I am very pleased to be a member of this committee and this is really a very important issue to me because I'm a founder of an art museum and have done a lot... MoCADA; that's right... and have done a lot of after-school programming and summer youth programs within our institution and coming from my not-for-profit world is always so important to be able to make the case for why the work that you do is so important. So those statistics really empower us with the ability

1 to garner a larger portion of the city's budget
2 towards those programs, but also most importantly,
3 public safety has been such a huge component of this
4 election cycle, everybody has been talking about it,
5 and would want to know, has there been any
6 correlation or discussion or any numbers crunching
7 that shows what the levels of crime that consisted of
8 young people committing crimes; has there been any
9 number that shows this year the number of young
10 people in the Summer Youth Program was this and crime
11 went down by this; this year it was this and crime
12 went up by this, that sort of thing, so that way we
13 can really show that there is a very direct
14 correlation to the safety of our city, to the
15 development of our youth; are there any kind of
16 numbers such as those currently at this time?

18 ALAN CHENG: We don't have any of those
19 numbers, [background comment] but I'm sure, you know
20 other agencies do. But I mean that's something that
21 has been raised [background comment] in prior
22 hearings and also I think around the country there's
23 an interest in that information. You know we... we
24 just... you know, for DYCD, our focus is basically
25 seeing this as an employment program, not... you know

1 this program started in New York City in the 1960s
2 and I think the primary goal back then was really to...
3 to really reduce crime, reduce, you know, the idle
4 time that young people have out there to potentially
5 cause trouble. Over the years, you know especially
6 in the last decade or two, you know we've really
7 changed the focus of the program to a program that
8 develops young people to help them realize their
9 potential in terms of education and long-term
10 employability and things like that. So we haven't
11 really gone that angle in terms of our approach with
12 potential funders, because we want to market this as
13 a program that's about the work, it's about... you know
14 that we have a lot of young people in the city who
15 are doing the right thing, you know and they just
16 need the opportunity to get their foot in the door
17 into a workplace and show their medal to prove that
18 they can succeed... [interpose]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Let me jus...

21 ALAN CHENG: so we're trying to do that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I... I just wanna...

23 I'm sorry to cut you off; I just wanna say that those
24 statistics will be critically important to us in this
25 upcoming budget cycle; these numbers will be very

critical and I understand the challenges, because evaluation costs money as well, but this I would say could be a critical changing point in terms of how we're able to discuss the importance of the Summer Youth Program, because we need to show how vital this program is to the safety of our communities and to the enrichment of our young people and definitely wanted to state that. I also wanted to ask you as well; is there some kind of... for the students that are participating, is there some kind of... and maybe Council Member King or others had asked this; is there some kind of pack that they would receive so that way they get a card to go to all the cultural institutions in the city during that time for free; they get opportunities to go to different shows or games or to go to the Barclays Arena or they get a chance to meet with Bill de Blasio, the Mayor, who gets a chance to talk to all of the young people that are in the program; are there enriching activities where they would be able to further their educational experience, expand their minds so that they have opportunities to connect into all of the resources of the city?

ALAN CHENG: There hasn't been anything formal as you described; it sounds... sounds like something that's worth pursuing; I mean... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Sounds like I have my work cut out for me.

ALAN CHENG: I mean the one thing that we do do is; anybody who's participated in our program even once, you know we let them know about opportunities within DYCD, like you know other things that are available; you know we invite them to be connected with us through Facebook, through social media so that they're aware, 'cause we post a lot of jobs and scholarship opportunities and things like that, you know other free things you know, or you know, tickets to things or stuff like that, we do post that, so... but we... we don't do it in a formal way where you know there's a... you know I think you're talking about like a membership card, like membership passes, privileges... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's right.
[laughter] Every young person should have that. And I just wanna close out my comments by saying that I'm so concerned for those young people that don't get selected in the lottery and I was thinking... I had an

1
2 idea; this may be something that you all have thrown
3 out or heard a million times before, but for that
4 group that's not, is there some way that there could
5 be an educational opportunity that they would go
6 through a summer job training program and that would
7 then increase their opportunity in the lottery or
8 they would be prioritized in some special kind of way
9 to be able to participate in the program next year;
10 if they successfully complete this program, that
11 perhaps could happen in each borough specifically,
12 that they are able to go through this job training
13 program, the ability to take certain classes, to have
14 different people lecture to them or talk to them or
15 the ability to go on certain trips to different
16 institutions, something where we could utilize
17 potentially our schools in order to do job training
18 for young people? Because the fact of the matter is,
19 job training and the important social skills, the
20 ability to create a resume, the ability to understand
21 how to present a business card; how do you dress for
22 success, all of these key components often do get
23 lost because training times have to be so quick and
24 they don't have an opportunity to encompass all of
25 that, but I think if they could have a long-range

1
2 summer program that would give them the incentive to
3 apply next year and that they would be prioritized in
4 the lottery next year would create a better
5 opportunity for young people to be better trained,
6 better equipped, ready to go and have a sense that
7 they won't be lost or forgotten over the summer in
8 that way. What do you think about that?

9 ALAN CHENG: It sounds great; I mean
10 obviously [laughter]... I mean the biggest... [interpose]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's a...
12 [laughter]

13 ALAN CHENG: Yeah, the biggest... the
14 biggest challenge we have right now... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I got it on
16 record.

17 ALAN CHENG: The... yeah, the biggest
18 challenge we have is really you know, as you've seen,
19 you know we were talking about 100,000 young people
20 that we would love to give jobs to and our focus is
21 trying to divert every single resource to paying as
22 many young people to work. So we haven't thought
23 about diverting those resources otherwise to doing
24 something that you talked about, but I did wanna give
25 an example -- so we do have a couple of programs that

1 are funded... from separate funding, through the
2 Workforce Investment Act, [background comment]
3 federal funding; that actually more or less kind of
4 model... you know, some of the things that you talked
5 about, so we have an in-school and out-of-school
6 youth program; both of those programs are year-round
7 programs; they start you know in September, let's
8 say; the in-school youth program, if they stay in
9 school, they stay in the program, they get
10 opportunities to you know, learn about careers, about
11 college, they do a lot of different things and then
12 with the promise that if they finish everything and
13 they fulfill their requirements, that the following
14 summer they have a summer job [background comment]
15 outside the lottery. So that happens on that scale
16 and roughly... that opportunity's offered to about
17 1,600 young people every summer.

18
19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: 'Kay. Thank you.
20 Thank you for your answers and I see where I have to
21 do some work. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much
23 Council Member Cumbo. I've got some more... just a few
24 more questions for you; not too many, because now
25 we've gotta give you some break and let you go. But

1
2 in terms of requirement for the providers, those
3 organizations who want to be summer youth providers
4 or contractors, and what are the requirements for
5 them to be accepted by DYCD to provide a Summer Youth
6 Program? Are there some requirements for that?

7 ALAN CHENG: Well the requirement is they
8 submit a proposal and the proposal should outline
9 their experience, their organizational capability,
10 what their program approach is to you know the model
11 that we've presented and they get evaluated on those
12 things, based on what they've you know written to
13 demonstrate those things and everybody gets evaluated
14 on the same, you know standard and you know, those
15 folks who do well, they get awarded; I mean that's
16 basically the requirement.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know that I asked
18 a similar question, you know at the very beginning,
19 but I'm thinking about the staff of those
20 organizations; when we talk about the safety of the
21 young people, we are dealing with young people; are
22 there certain requirements that should be [background
23 comment] fulfilled by the staff working in the summer
24 program? And just, you know to piggyback on the
25 safety issue question asked by Council Member Cumbo.

ALAN CHENG: Absolutely. I mean, the staff... we request that all of our providers do adequate background checks on everybody that works with young people; this is not just... you know, with teenage programs, obviously throughout, especially of our younger children's programs, and the staff have to have specific qualifications, so if they're hiring somebody to be, you know a case worker, you know they should have relevant experience, education; background. And you know, so those two things, you know are taken into consideration, you know they hire folks and we... at DYCD we look at the proposed staffing patterns and then who they're planning to bring in and we have the final say in terms of approving... if we have questions about specific staff, based on what they've given us; you know, we have the right to say to them, well you have to, you know, respond to these questions or you know we have to reject somebody because we're not comfortable with their background.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So what about the applicant, the young people who want to be part of the summer program; are there certain requirements also they should fulfill?

ALAN CHENG: So you're talking about eligibility for the program or... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

ALAN CHENG: The eligibility program is very simple; they just have to be residents of one of the five boroughs of New York City and they have to be between 14 and 24 as of July 1st.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So in summer 2013 the duration of the Summer Youth Program was reduced to six weeks from the previous seven weeks; how did the change affect the daycare cent... you know the day camp Beacon program, Cornerstone and OST program that teach you guys Summer Youth Program in the seven-week program?

ALAN CHENG: So... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What is the affect on...

ALAN CHENG: So last year was the first year that we instituted that change; we're still working with... we obviously also oversee Beacons and the OST and the Cornerstone programs, so we're talking to those staff about the impact of the reduction on our side compared to what they have to do with their programs and you know we haven't... we

1 don't have anything to share at this point, but we
2 are working closely with them. The purpose of... the
3 reason why we reduced to six weeks; one was... the
4 biggest thing was a financial reason; when we cut off
5 a week from the program we're able to employ anywhere
6 from like 4-5,000 more young people than we did with
7 the existing budget than we could have. And also, we
8 were looking closely at the impact. Historically we
9 found that the first week of the program, which is
10 typically right... it coincides with the Independence
11 Day Holiday, is very low attendance and we also saw
12 that at the tail end of the program there's also low
13 attendance because you have a lot of young people who
14 wanna have a couple weeks off before they have to go
15 back to school, so they take off, and you also have
16 those who are either going to college or on their way
17 to college leaving early as well. So we saw that the
18 bookends of the program were low attendance in terms
19 of Summer Youth Employment Program, so we looked...
20 when we made the decision to cut it to six it was
21 taking into consideration all those things --
22 financial, as well as the historical experience that
23 we had with the program.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

I've got another question for you; this is going to be the last one. You know every time that we are doing something we have to take a moment also to evaluate, to assess what we are doing, even if we have a wonderful program there's always room for improvement; there is no such thing as perfect anything. So what system do you have in place to evaluate the outcome of the Summer Youth Program, the success of the Summer Youth Program and you know, what we have to do to make it a more efficient program, a better program?

ALAN CHENG: So we strive for perfection; we know it's hard getting there, but a few things that we do -- one is that we get feedback from our young people, so we do a survey of random young people in the program; I think we reached out to over 1,000 young people in each of the last few summers to do a phone survey to figure out what is their satisfaction of the program; what went well; what did they learn; how was their work experience. We also, and especially this year, because we just rolled out a new model, as you've... as we've heard through the testimonies, solicited feedback from our providers,

1 from our provider community to find out what went
2 well; what didn't; what are some things that we can
3 improve. And you know, we know... we're the first ones
4 to admit that we don't have it 100 percent right all
5 the time and you know we are... we have an open door
6 policy in terms of talking to providers, getting
7 feedback from them about things that we can improve
8 on and we make those changes. We've also listened to
9 the City Council over the years as well to make a few
10 changes. So one of the big changes that we heard
11 loud and clear from this past summer and from prior
12 summers is that there was... the amount of time that
13 folks had to enroll people was too short, so I'm
14 pleased to announce here and it's been already told
15 to our providers that we're releasing our
16 applications a full month earlier than we did in the
17 past; it's actually coming out next Monday, March the
18 3rd; it's never been released this early in at least
19 10, 12; maybe even more years; I mean I've only been
20 working on this program for about 12 years, so you
21 know, a lot of people are used to April, but this
22 gets people a lot more time, gives everybody almost a
23 full month more time to do what they need to do in
24
25

terms of providers to get the work done before the jobs start. So we listened to everybody.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much Commission Cheng, thank you and Mr. White, thank you and one more time, I want to congratulate you for the wonderful job that DYCD is doing on behalf of the youth and also on behalf of the parents and on behalf of the City of New York, because when we help the young people we are helping New York City and we all know that they are the future of our community, future of our city and I want to plea and I want to let you know that I'm going to advocate for the resources for DYCD and for all the programs that our young people deserve and need and I guarantee, and I know that Council Member Cumbo will be alongside with me fighting together [background comment] and all the members of the Committee, we are going to go to Washington, go to Albany and we are going to work very hard to make sure that we can secure the future of this great program. Thank you very much.

[background comments]

ALAN CHENG: Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE: Nice job.

ANDRE WHITE: Thank you.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

Thank you. Now I'm going to call the second panel, but I have to step out; I've got to go for a few minutes because I have another public hearing, immigration; I'm just going to be there and come back right away. Council Member Cumbo, can you please take over for me for a few minutes? Thank you.

[pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [background comment] We're going to bring Kevin Douglas [background comments] from United Neighborhood Houses, we're going to bring Heather Ramirez, Campaign for Summer Jobs and I believe Kelly Daniels, Campaign for Summer Jobs.

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just wanna welcome you and thank you so much for your patience and thank you so much for your testimony today and we look forward to hearing from you. [background comment]

HEATHER RAMIREZ: Okay. Good afternoon...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good afternoon.

HEATHER RAMIREZ: Council Member Cumbo.

My name is Heather Ramirez and I'm a Public Service Scholar at Hunter College and I am with United Neighborhood Houses and I'm here today with Kevin Douglas, the Policy Analyst from United Neighborhood Houses, UNH, and Kelly Daniels, National Urban Fellow at the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition. Okay.

UNH and NFSC co-founded the Campaign for Summer Jobs and we are here today on behalf of Campaign for Summer Jobs, which is a coalition of nearly 100 community-based and citywide organizations in New York City that advocate for State and City investment and effective programmatic models for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The Campaign was initiated in 1999 following a change in legislation that eliminated the federal Jobs Training Partnership Act that provided funding for summer jobs. Since then, CSJ has worked really hard to advocate for State and City funds to ensure the availability for summer jobs for youth. Every year for the past 15 years, the Campaign for Summer Jobs has taken nearly 300 young people to Albany to meet with assembly members and senators [background comment] to discuss the benefits of the program. Today we will discuss

the value and impact of the Department of Youth and Community Development's (DYCD) SYEP, the additional \$13 million city investment in FY 2015 and our vision of SYEP expansion in the next five years, along with some of the program challenges that have arisen with the new SYEP model that we've been hearing from our providers [background comment] that are part of the coalition, so we definitely wanna talk about that as well. Okay.

So the benefits of the Summer Youth Employment Program, a lot of these have been touched upon, but it's beneficial for both the youth participating and the community as well and inherently, SYEP provides a work environment to learn and develop soft skills, such as punctuality, responsibility, effective communication skills, time management and budgeting for youth. Again, like SYEP, these jobs... a lot of times it's their first job for young people.

The personal value for youth participants are the benefits of independence, responsibility and the ability to purchase their own things and a lot of times they use the money to help families, so that helps as well. In addition, SYEP is a safe and

productive summer activity for youth to engage in, which was mentioned earlier. In terms of academics, a 2012 study conducted by the NYU Steinhart School of Culture, Education and Human Development showed that youth who were at educational risk, indicated by high rates of school absence, who participated in SYEP had a higher rate of attendance following the school year, as well as an increase and likelihood of taking and passing the Math and English Regents exams, so this definitely impacted their ability in terms of academics. Additionally, in recent years the SYEP has also guaranteed nearly 2,000 work opportunities per summer for youth with disabilities, many of whom otherwise would not be able to have any employment opportunities.

We also know that SYEP benefits local community economies. There's a report that DYCD put out about how the youth spending habits, a lot of times they contribute to the community... [background comment] community stores, like bodegas in the area, as well as additionally, about 32 percent of SYEP work as counselors in day camps, daycare centers and community centers, which allows agencies to accept a higher number of enrollees during the summer due to

1 the mandated child ratios. I myself participated on
2 the SYEP as a senior counselor at a camp in the South
3 Bronx and I know for certain without the SYEP staff
4 members the program would not be able to offer the
5 sliding scale day camp and summer camp [background
6 comment] that they offered in Hunts Point. So the
7 benefits provided by SYEP are a true asset, not only
8 individually, but also for the community as a whole.

9
10 So some of the concerns we would like to
11 raise are -- as you may know, the last year SYEP
12 program was revamped under a new programmatic model
13 that was set in place. In 2013 there was a reduction
14 in the number of weeks and the amount of hours in
15 SYEP. The reduction was disruptive to many of the
16 summer camps, as mentioned, because a lot of these
17 camps rely heavily on SYEP workers, [background
18 comment] so they weren't able... they just had to... last
19 minute try to find alternatives.

20 To alleviate this problem we recommend
21 DYCD restore SYEP to the original length of seven
22 weeks versus the six weeks that they have cut the
23 program to. Beyond the impact on summer camps, the
24 program reduction was also disheartening for youth
25 who are familiar with the traditional seven week

program, as well as their parents, who had to find alternative means for their children.

And another concern that we have is the introduction of segregating youth into options based on age. It's made it difficult for providers to secure worksites for the younger folks between... option one is 14-15, since job sites often agree to take youth this young only as part of a larger adult cohort, which are 16-24, and it also impacted the ability of youth of different ages to interact and learn from each other. And again, I participated in the program and I think that was a really crucial part of the program, that you had a lot of younger youth come in and it's their first job experience and they were able to look towards the older youth as well, [background comment] so there is some learning there. Okay.

And also we want to bring into the... it's been a longstanding issue that has been encountered in terms of the funding mechanism for the overall program. So basically the funding is disbursed and the funding upfront is inadequate and it's not enough to successfully plan and implement the program, 'cause a lot of the work in the beginning is very

intensive; again, this is trying to recruit placement sites, conduct enrollment and placement as well. So this work, a lot of times the contractors do not have the resources required to do this, unfortunately. So what we are recommending.. okay, so what we're recommending is the minimum contract advance be 25 percent advance with the ability to negotiate up to 50 percent. Okay. And we strongly recommend that the new DYCD leadership improve relationships with their contracted providers, because we have a wealth of knowledge conducting these programs and we feel that the communication has been lacking and it could be improved upon.

So we also wanna talk about the limited SYEP resources, 'cause this is something that has been brought up. The benefits of SYEP have been clear, but unfortunately due to diminished resources, the weeks and hours of the program have been reduced, even though Governor Cuomo's executive budget in proposing \$27.5 million for SYEP, which is an increase from the last year, we are aware that without additional investment and the lack of city investment we are still gonna see 2,750 fewer jobs

than in 2013 as a result of the minimum wage increase. [background comment]

KELLY DANIELS: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Uhm-hm.

KELLY DANIELS: Assemblywoman Cumbo and thank you to all those behind us that are in support of SYEP and also to the co-founders of Campaign for Summer Jobs. My name is Kelly... can you hear me okay?

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uhm-hm.

KELLY DANIELS: Heather just spoke about the importance of SYEP, the benefits of it for the youth, the community and she is also a product of SYEP, so that was nice to hear. What I'm going to run down right now are some numbers... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That'd be great.

KELLY DANIELS: the funding of SYEP, some of them I think Kevin's gonna help me out a little bit, and also a five-year expansion and restoration plan that we have planned for Campaign for Summer Jobs as well. [background comment]

So to start off, primarily SYEP is funded by city, state, federal and private funding. Starting off with private -- in the past it's been

1 funded by New York Fund to Advance New York City;
2 however, those contributions... we're unclear as to
3 whether they'll be earmarked for SYEP this year,
4 putting at risk a \$2 million decrease in that
5 investment. Furthermore, federal funds, we still
6 won't know for some time.

7
8 Now going on to the city and state -- the
9 City Tax Levy has been... in 2008 we... they inve... excuse
10 me... New York City invested \$30.9 million; however
11 this year, or excuse me, this fiscal year, it's down
12 to \$20.6; that's \$10 million decrease. And in that
13 same amount of time where there is that decrease... in
14 that same amount of time where they wanna decrease,
15 we've had more applicants, 103,000 all the way up to
16 135,000, so we've had a decrease as well as an
17 increase in applicants.

18 So I am told to wrap up, so what we have
19 is a minimum wage increase, which is going to affect
20 the number of slots, as you already heard with the
21 previous people that were here before, so that... if we
22 maintain the same investment, there will be a loss of
23 2,700... almost 2,800 slots for SYEP youth. However,
24 if the City puts in some more funds for this, we want
25 to be able to maintain the same number of slots as

1
2 last year; although it was low, it was just below
3 36,000, we had over 135,000 applicants, so if we can
4 maintain 30,000... excuse me, just below 36, I mean,
5 that would be nice. I'm going to propose that with
6 the minimum wage increase and the increase and need
7 for the Summer Youth Employment Program the City
8 would need to invest \$4 million more just in that
9 area to maintain the same level of slots as last
10 year.

11 I'm going to wrap up and I'm gonna open
12 it up for questions. Thank you so much for having us
13 here to testify.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Let me
15 just ask you, before we turn it over, what are your
16 thoughts as it pertains to the minimum wage increase
17 as it pertains to the Summer Youth Program; how do
18 you feel about that?

19 KELLY DANIELS: How do I feel about the
20 increase?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uhm-hm in minimum
22 wage.

23 KELLY DANIELS: Well... [interpose]
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: As it pertains to summer youth and what the implications of that could mean if money isn't restored.

KELLY DANIELS: Well if... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: At the level that we would like for it to be restored at in order to... [interpose]

KELLY DANIELS: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: keep the same amount of students.

KELLY DANIELS: Right. Well first of all there's that restoration and then there's also the restoration of changing the Summer Youth Program from six weeks back to seven weeks, so that would be nice. But when it comes to SYEP, I think that this will be great for kids, obviously, to get the minimum wage increase, but it's gonna decrease the slots that are available. It's great for the community, it's great for the youth and their families, but if we don't get this increase from the city, it's gonna be... it's gonna be tough to then restore the same amount of funds next year.

[background comments]

KEVIN DOUGLAS: You've been generous in granting us a lot of time here, so I'll wrap up quickly; I just want to quickly speak to you... little bit of question Kelly touched on -- we're certainly supportive of the increase in the minimum wage; many of the youth that we're talking about come from families where their parents would actually be dependant on that wage, so we have no qualms with the minimum wage; we actually would like to see it increased higher and would be supportive of effort to the State level to accelerate the timeline in which they're gonna phase in that minimum wage increase, so really our message is -- that's great, it's happening, but we need to make sure the resources are there and we are certainly not kinda just putting this on the city; we've done a lot of work at the state level, along with DYCD, to really ask the state to make up that gap in funding with the city needing to be a partner in that. So we're hopeful to get the money from the state, we're gonna push for that until April 1, [background comment] and then at that point, you know the city will see how much is put in and what is to be made up by the city. The last thing I'll add on to that, Kelly alluded to just briefly,

1 is the \$4 million required to maintain jobs in the
2 city is a minimum, so Heather also [background
3 comment] alluded to a plan we have; many of the
4 council members, yourself included, talked about the
5 100,000 youth who currently aren't getting jobs
6 [background comment] and so we're proposing a five-
7 year scale-up that you'll find in the last page of
8 the testimony to get us 200,000 jobs. So what we're
9 asking the Council to do this year is to work with
10 the administration, to work with DYCD, to restore \$13
11 million to the budget on top of the current
12 investment. That \$13 million represents both the \$4
13 million needed to preserve jobs in light of the
14 minimum wage increase, as well as an additional
15 further \$9 million to grow jobs and put us on track
16 in year one to really moving towards that 100,000
17 slot target.

18
19 So we're aware of the minimum wage
20 increase; we're asking for your help in it; we're
21 doing what we can at the state level, but are really
22 hoping that you, the Chair and others will look at a
23 longer term vision to actually do our jobs in the
24 community.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Noted. [laughter]

Wanted to ask as well; you had mentioned... and please remind me of your name again, I'm so sorry.

HEATHER RAMIREZ: My name's Heather.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Heather, you spoke that you had a difficulty in communications with DYCD; was that in the previous administration or is that also in the current administration?

HEATHER RAMIREZ: Well like looking forward we would like to work with the new administration to improve upon communication, and this is something that we've heard from our providers, 'cause again, Campaign for Summer Jobs is a coalition of 100 plus community-based organizations, so it's something we are really happy about working towards.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. Thank you. I do feel very confident that moving forward in this administration that you will find that your ability to communicate with the different agencies will improve and so please keep us informed of that. In April, when you go to Albany, I personally would love to go, so please keep me informed of that, as well as the other members of the Committee I'm sure would

1
2 express a strong interest in being supportive of... or
3 even... of course, prior to that, in your work with the
4 state as well, because with UPK there's been a lot of
5 support on the city level in traveling to Albany in
6 order to advocate for UPK and I think that what's
7 happening here in terms of Summer Youth Programs
8 should be advocated with the same level of urgency
9 and strength and support on the city level.

10 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Absolutely. Our major
11 lobby day with the youth has since passed, but we'll
12 certainly keep you apprised of future lobby days and
13 I hope you don't regret that offer, 'cause we'll
14 certainly, you know call on you [laughter] and your
15 colleagues to help us really work at the state level.
16 [crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I would love to go
18 to Albany. [laughter]

19 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Excellent; we'll make it
20 happen. Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so much.
22 Thank you. Next we'll have Kevin Coffey from CAMBA
23 and we will have Sean Reyes from Queens Community
24 House. And then, please excuse my pronunciation if I
25 don't get it correct -- Sandino Sanchez from The

Children's Aid Society and Rabbi Picos [phonetic].

Did I get that correct? I'm close? Okay. And I apologize that we will have to limit our testimonies to three minutes and unfortunately there will be that timer. And we are joined back by our Chair, Council Member Mathieu Eugene -- suddenly I feel so much more confident again. [laugh]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much Council Member Cumbo... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: thank you. So I think that you can... you want some credit [laughter] as a member of the Committee; thank you for taking over for me, [background comment] but I had to leave to go to the other side because I have another hearing on immigration; it is mandatory for all of us, chairman or not, to attend the public hearing, so now I'm please to get back. [background comment]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. So we will start with Mr. Coffey.

KEVIN COFFEY: Good afternoon.
[interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon.

KEVIN COFFEY: My name is Kevin Coffey; I'm the Senior Vice President for Education and Youth Development at CAMBA and I am here today to testify on behalf of our agency with regard to the funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program, also known as SYEP.

CAMBA recommends that the city invest an additional \$13 million, as you've just heard, this year in SYEP in order to employ 39,600 youth, just over a 10 percent increase from last year.

[background comments]

In the summer of 2013, CAMBA placed 450 young people into SYEP job opportunities. SYEP placements included both for-profit and non-profit sites. Among them were daycare centers, summer camps, libraries and hospitals. For many of these young people, their experience in SYEP was their first exposure to the world of work. The SYEP experience is often transformative for young people, helping them to see in a concrete manner the vital link between staying in school and pursuing higher educational and ultimately becoming successful, self-sufficient, contributing adults.

SYEP has often a lasting impact on its participants; this past year, for example, 4 of 6 youth who worked at Eyes on the Prize, one of our sites over the summer, were offered after-school jobs as counselors and tutors during the regular school year; the director of Eyes on the Prize felt that these young people were outstanding workers during the summer and wanted to keep them on permanently, [background comment] a situation that happens often with us, quite frankly.

I'm editing my remarks 'cause a lot of this ground has already been covered somewhat. In the FY 2015 preliminary budget, the city proposes to baseline SYEP at last year's funding... excuse me, at last year's funding level; while this may seem like a victory, it is actually an effective cut in services because of the increase in the minimum wage, which again has already been discussed. In other words, level funding amounts to a cut in the number of placements that we can make. Last year we at CAMBA unfortunately had to turn away over 4,000 applicants who were looking to earn some money for themselves and their families to prepare for a future career. I urge the Council to bear in mind that the current

price per participant is too low for the amount of staff infrastructure and work required to implement the program. This is especially true for newer or smaller providers. On behalf of CAMBA and other providers I urge the Council to invest an additional \$13 million in SYEP in order to take into account the increase in the minimum wage and enable us to place 39,600 youth into meaningful summer jobs.

Looking to the future, CAMBA and others believe; again, as you've just heard, that the city should embrace a five-year plan that runs parallel to the proposed expansion of universal pre-K and after-school programs, ramping up to serve 100,000 youth each summer... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Great idea.

KEVIN COFFEY: this is... I agree...

[laughter] this is well within our grasp and will help to provide an adequate supply of youth workers needed to staff summer camp as the system expands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to working with the City Council to maintain adequate funding for a robust SYEP in the coming year.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very much. [interpose]

KEVIN COFFEY: You're welcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.
[background comments] We will now hear from Sean Reyes. Thank you Mr. Reyes.

SEAN REYES: Thank you very much. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Sean Reyes; I'm the Director of Youth Employment Services of the Queens Community House. I'd like to thank the Chairman and the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to testify regarding the 2013 Summer Youth Employment Program. Similarly to Mr. Coffey, I will be editing my remarks so we can cover and get some important points out.

Last year the Queens Community House served over 600 youth in the Summer Youth Employment Program, yet we received almost 4,000 applications for the actual program itself. In other words, we have seen that for every one youth we served through Summer Youth Employment Program there are six other participants who will not be able to participate. The ration of one position for every seven applicants illustrates the point that many youth will not

1
2 experience the benefits during the summer and lose
3 out on valuable opportunities for crucial
4 development, vital earnings and career exposure. As
5 minimum wage continues to increase, each participant
6 served will cost more and lead to reductions of slots
7 further over the next two years if state and city
8 funding does not increase. I think this sends an
9 important message to youth and families in New York
10 City that if we do not increase the funding we are
11 not interested in further investing in their futures.

12 This past summer many of my colleagues
13 have mentioned the shortening of the program to six
14 weeks caused quite an unhappy turn for families, as
15 well as participants, reducing the amount they were
16 able to earn, as well as their exposure to certain
17 careers and opportunities. Also, the DYCD instituted
18 the separation of youth participants into the option
19 one and option two categories. Option one youth were
20 experiencing or further limited the number of hours
21 that they were able to serve in the program, as well
22 as also there was a difficulty created by finding
23 worksites for these young adults, [background
24 comment] as many worksites felt that they could now
25 opt out by selecting only the option to contract.

DYCD's changes to program structure such as the requirement of participants to attend unpaid program training during May and June have exponentially increased the amount of work SYEP contractors and providers, such as QCH, have to perform in advance of the actual program. The aforementioned increase in program workload illustrates a need for more funds to be available to providers to allow for their appropriate hiring of staff and program costs. On average, approximately 15 percent of program funding is made available for this initial intensive period. For example, that 15 percent of the cost is about \$48.75 per participant. This \$48.75 is intended to cover the following service for participants -- worksite development, participant enrollment, work experience placement and the mandatory participant orientation piece. Conservatively speaking, if we say that the average youth is getting 10 hours of service, [background comment] we're only investing \$4.88 per hour [background comment] at an intensive period where we believe we are preparing these young adults for their work experience.

As far as we see, these actual numbers point to the necessity of considering how DYCD can assist providers further in providing services by allowing a larger percentage of funding, such as 25 percent or more to be available or raising their estimate of the administrative costs of participants to a more reasonable amount, such as \$4.25.

I just wanna thank [bell] the Committee today for the opportunity to speak.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you so much; thank you for being here; thank you for your testimony. We will have next...

MALE VOICE: Rabbi Pikus.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

[background comments]

RABBI PIKUS: I welcome the opportunity to... [interpose, background comment] I welcome the opportunity to address the audience; I mean, City Council, who are indeed concerned about the future of a program [interpose, background comment] which is contributing so much to the... to the, A., number one, to the overall social climate, to the quality of life that prevails in the city. I mean, I go back a long time, almost to the inception... I mean... and when the...

and some of the factors that have... the catalyst to the establishment of this program and extension even by the Federal Government. [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I hate to interrupt you, but if you could speak into the microphone so... [interpose]

RABBI PIKUS: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: it makes the broadcast.

RABBI PIKUS: Well going back, I mean to the riots, the Watts riots that took place in California; I mean but we're reaching a level right now, because through this decreasing process constantly that we're just making ourselves more vulnerable to the reaction of these kids in a climate, A... now when you follow the Wall Street Journal, the economy throughout the city, especially for the low-income families, has not increased. In other words, the level of employ... if we just consider the unemployment level of these lower level families, I mean it's actually, if anything, might be increasing as their job opportunities. So what are we doing that we're tell... A., number one, we are encouraging, in other words, the private-sector

1 employers I mean to compete, in other words, against
2 low-income workers to supplant them during the summer
3 opportunities, [background comment] so basically, we
4 might be defeating ourselves in the long-term, number
5 one. Number two, as was pointed out by my colleagues
6 from the other organizations, the day camps,
7 especially summer programs, I would say, are affected
8 very severely, because they cannot maintain staffs
9 when the program was for eight weeks or seven weeks
10 and the staffing that is provided to them can only
11 serve six weeks, so this again reduces the
12 opportunities for these youngsters to find jobs in
13 one important sector, which is important for three
14 reasons -- number one, I mean these... many of these
15 day camps are not-for-profits; they don't operate for
16 a profit and if we reduce their ability to hire these
17 youngsters, I mean so we're reducing the number
18 ultimately that'll be available to accommodate the
19 youngsters, [background comment] so I think these are
20 very important considerations that we have to take
21 into account besides, in other words, the overall
22 impact as we move in the direction of reducing the
23 number of jobs as a city as a whole.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much
Rabbi Pikus... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Thank
you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you so much.
Let me call now Miss Sandino Sanchez from The
Children's Aid Society. [background comments,
laughter]

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: Good afternoon; my name
is Yola... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good afternoon.

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: Yolanda McBride; I'm
actually... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Ah...

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: the Director of Public
Policy at [bell] The Children's Aid Society..
[interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I'm sorry... I'm sorry
about that... [crosstalk]

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: that's okay... and I'm
actually testifying on behalf of Sandino Sanchez, who
is our... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Oh are you... alright,
thanks.

[laughter]

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: Employment and Contracts Director at The Children's Aid Society; he was not able to be here to testify, so I will do my best on his behalf. [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Alright. [laugh]

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: So The Children's Aid Society is an anti-poverty and multi-service organization that provides comprehensive programs and supports from cradle through college, to children and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods. Today we are organized into service hubs, concentrated in the South Bronx, Harlem, Washington Heights and Northern Staten Island, neighborhoods operated by almost 2,000 full-time and part-time employees. Citywide we offer more than 100 programs in 45 sites where we provide education and youth development services, foster care and preventive services, after-school, weekend and summer enrichment, early childhood programs, teen pregnancy, resident programs, et cetera.

The Summer Youth Employment Program, SYEP, is a core part of our employment and work readiness programs at The Children's Aid Society

provided to young adults in New York City. For the past five years The Children's Aid Society has had contracts from the Department of Youth and Community Development for SYEP slots. In 2013, Children's Aid received approximately 7,000 applications for the 1,000 slots that we actually had; of the total cohort, 60 percent of young people were between the ages of 16-24, 40 percent were 14-15-year-olds, 55 percent were male and 45 percent female and 90 percent of the students enrolled resided in either the Bronx or Manhattan. So there is definitely a large demand, based on the fact that we had to turn away 6,000 applicants for this program for the many reasons that were described today about youth using this funding to supplement income for their families and also supporting a young person's ability to pay for higher education expenses if they're in college.

So I will skip to just the recommendations, which you've heard most of them already, helping youth and young adults understand the value of education and employment, imparting the necessary skills and offering a realistic vision of what is needed in order to have a productive future is critical to our work; it would be a tragedy for

the city if we did not continue to create healthy pathways to the labor market for the future leaders of the city; that being said, we have a couple of recommendations; again, some of them you've already heard -- younger youth, ages 14-15 in the program are harder to place than older youth, because of the legal limitations that this age group has for the types of jobs that they can legally perform; also because for some of the additional reasons that were expressed around employers acting out of taking the younger youth because of the splitting of the contracts. So if the contracts are not going to change, we hope that the city would consider providing incentives to businesses and other potential partners to collaborate with CBOs to provide [bell] better opportunities. In regards to the contract, which is current an 80/20 split, we're asking for a 70/30 split or greater so that we can have either 30 percent or more of the contract expenses up front for the administrative costs for the program. And last, to address with the minimum wage, you know some colleagues here on the panel have already addressed wanting to have \$13 million provided by the city to make sure that we maintain

the same level of young people that can access the program. So just thank you again for the opportunity to testify and welcome any questions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, but I would like to... [clearing throat] excuse me... ask Rabbi Pikus to come back to the panel if you would, please, just because I've got a few questions; not because I want to bother you, [background comment, laughter] because I know that you are working so hard in the community already; I don't want to put you in more difficult position. So for all of you, thank you very much for the wonderful job that you are doing again, because I CAMBA, you know is... CAMBA is in my district and a wonderful job that you're doing, Rabbi Pikus, I know the great job you are doing and also The Children's Society, you know, all of you, you are doing a wonderful job and it is very important, as I mentioned previously, that we continue to work together to make sure that our young people continue to receive the opportunities that they need. I've got just a few questions; not too many.

But I know that the cut of budget has a very negative impact on the entire program... thank you

Council Member Cumbo, thank you so much. Thank you.

So besides the impact created by the budget cuts, are there any other challenges that you are facing in terms of providing the young people the services that you are trying to provide them through the Summer Youth Program? Anyone... anyone can answer. I know the budget cut is you know, one of the many reasons that you may face many challenges, but in addition to that... [interpose]

SEAN REYES: I think one of the...

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: any other... yeah.

SEAN REYES: I'm sorry, Chairman; one of the things I think we could address and I think one of the changes this year is regarding the communication with families in New York and youth participants, you know, around the changes that have occurred with the program; I know we experienced last year many families that were very much not in the know of major changes to the program -- the shortening of the program, the separation of options, the documentation changes. I think many providers... I'm very lucky to work with a group of providers I think that are committed to the youth and the families of New York City in terms of getting the

information out; I think better work can be done; I know we can find better resources for sharing this information with our youth and our families so that when families come in there are not assumptions they're making up based on prior years that could possibly eliminate them from participating in the program.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, Mr. Coff...

[interpose]

KEVIN COFFEY: And again, my name is Kevin Coffey; I'm from CAMBA, and thank you for this question. [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You're welcome, sir.

KEVIN COFFEY: I would say that as was mentioned previously; I think the Campaign for Summer Jobs folks mentioned it, is... and then, of course Councilman, you may have been out of the room; Councilwoman Cumbo talked about increased communication, and I think that that's something that if we had a little more... if the communication with DYCD around some issues was a little bit better we could benefit from that. For example, it's very true and a lot of things have improved over the years with DYCD in terms of the way they run the program and I...

1
2 I mean I've been working this program since the old
3 Department of Employment had it, you know, 15, 18
4 years ago, and a lot of things over the years have
5 improved, so I don't wanna sound negative about DYCD,
6 but for example, if we could have a heads up about a
7 change, like the applications are gonna be out a
8 month earlier, that kind of communication would be
9 helpful.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Very good.
11 Is there any communication also between providers..

12 KEVIN COFFEY: Oh yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: to join forces to
14 maximize the result; is there any partnership, any
15 collaboration among providers to... [interpose]

16 KEVIN COFFEY: Yes is the short answer.
17 [laughter] We certainly... we participate, for
18 example, with Campaign for Summer Jobs, who preceded
19 us here at this table; over the years they've been
20 very effective in coordinating with providers on
21 advocacy and doing... I'm sorry... [background comment] I
22 have aloud voice; I don't wanna shout. [laugh] The
23 Campaign for Summer Jobs has been very effective in
24 organizing providers and around advocacy efforts, but
25 around communication and even some operational

issues, so I would say in general that there is good communication amongst the various SYEP providers.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: We know that... I'm sorry Rabbi Pikus. [background comments]

RABBI PIKUS: As we highlighted before, the number of the not-for-profits, they're affected by the cutbacks... in other words, in the timeframe that these youngsters can work; I mean... and how... it limits... it further limits the opportunities for these youngsters to find job opportunities and something should be addressed more effectively through a census or otherwise to see, A., how the program can be adjusted, whether different hours or different scales for older kids who qualify to be participants in some of these programs, because of the age factor could benefit as well as the children participating would benefit.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay, thank you very much Rabbi Pikus. So let me ask you another question. We know that New York City is home to so many immigrants and many people also who are not proficient in English and also they are facing a cultural barrier, a language barrier; the young people involved in the Summer Youth Program, who may

face cultural or language barriers, do you have in your organization; what do you have in your institution to help them overcome their language barrier or cultural barrier, just to make them you know benefit much more from the summer program; if the case exists?

RABBI PIKUS: Well I would just comment, direct... yes, directly and indirectly. The... [background comment] yes... yes... directly and indirectly. Number one, the best experience for these youngsters to integrate and to acculturate into the American society is the exposure that they have in a job and at work experience on the site, where they interrelate with others who are more proficient in the English language and they're learning to pick up the language more effectively, because the best way of teaching someone the language is through a conversational piece and this is their major experience when one can interact with the other. So that's one... that of in itself is an educational experience for these youngsters. In addition, I mean the pre-preparation, but mandated by DYCD basically touches upon the American system in general and gives some indication as to what acculturation implies

integrating into the American society, especially for the youths.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Yes.

KEVIN COFFEY: So the short answer again is yes to that question and my agency, as you're familiar with my agency, there's a... we're a multi-service agency, we have a lot of programs that address a lot of different issues, so any one of our programs is always a gateway into another program, another help or another support. Within the structure of SYEP itself, the SYEP program itself, there are certain supports for that, but it's not wide-ranging I would say.

YOLANDA MCBRIDE: I would say yes as well at The Children's Aid Society; I can get back to you in terms of how we address language barriers with the program, because our SYEP program coordinator's not here, but I can say for sure that in terms of addressing the cultural barriers, we actually pull from our senior and mid-level staff to provide... we actually augment the curriculum that is supposed to be provided through the SYEP program and so we, in addition to what we're supposed to provide, we provide additional supports around address cultural

barriers and also preparing the young people for a workplace, in addition to what is in the curriculum.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

Mr. Reyes, it seemed that you mentioned something about the unpaid programs. So the unpaid program; does the unpaid program decrease the motivation of the young people to be part of the summer program; is there any impact because the pro... you know, this part of the program is not paid, since the young people, they get involved to the program because they expect to have some income, some salary?

SEAN REYES: I think one area that we've seen the difficulty with it I think is in the case of the unpaid pieces and the time commitments, as I believe earlier was talked about, transportation; I don't exactly agree that young adults don't travel in New York City, we found that young adults that have come to the Queens Community House to participate in summer youth employment have come from as far as the Bronx and Staten Island to participate in our program and I think that these unpaid requirements earlier make it difficult for some of them to actually... once they are in the program, to have money far as transportation; I don't think it eliminates the

1 motivation. I think many of the providers have done
2 a great job of talking to our youth about what are
3 gonna be the long-term benefits of the program and I
4 think that in our case a lot of our staff have gone...
5 with that change that occurred this past summer... we
6 went very in-depth with families and youth about
7 what... although you might be giving or volunteering
8 some time for this unpaid training, what are those
9 long-term benefits you're gonna gain out of it?

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.
12 We all know that you know there is cut of budget from
13 the city, from the state, but I know that in not-for-
14 profit organization they are very good in raising
15 funding and that cannot exist only with the
16 government funding, I know that; you've got to do
17 some effort to raise some money from private sectors.
18 But is there any recommendation that you can give...
19 what can you say in terms of working together to
20 secure more funding for the Summer Youth Program,
21 funding in addition to the government funding, just
22 to make sure that we can secure the future of this
23 wonderful, wonderful program? Is there anything that
24 we can do together, working together, non-profit
25 organization and private sector; is there anything

that we can do to secure more funding for the Summer Youth Program? Any advice, recommendation; any thoughts on that?

KEVIN COFFEY: I'm not sure, but I would suggest that we already can... that expanding and continuing the partnership that already exists between the private... between the CBOs, government and DY... and DYCD is certainly part of government... and DYCD, as they mentioned working together to go to Albany and so forth and I think that's a fine idea and it's a fine reality; I think there could be an expansion of that; I don't know exactly what it looks like, but it takes some forethought and planning.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Thank you very much, one more time, thank you very much for your testimony and thank you for your wonderful job. Thank you.

KEVIN COFFEY: Thank you. [background comments]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: The last panel will be... let me call Stephanie Foots [phonetic]. Stephanie, excuse me if I mispronounce your name. Christian Lantigua [phonetic]; correct? Alright.

[background comments] Shelly Lee. Thank you. Is that Shira Simwarf or Simkoff [crosstalk]

SHIRA SAMEROFF: Yeah, Sam...

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Sameroff.

SHIRA SAMEROFF: Sorry; my handwriting's not great.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

[laugh, background comments] Please state your names and you may start any time please.

SHIRA SAMEROFF: So I'll... I'll introduce these guys. I'm Shira Sameroff from the Center for Family Life, a community-based organization... [background comments] sure. I'm not used to microphones... [laugh] I'm Shira Sameroff from Center for Family Life, a community-based organization in Sunset Park, Brooklyn and these are three young people who work with us, two who are part of the Summer Youth Employment Program, Stephanie, who was hired on as staff this year, and Shirley, who stayed on as part of our volunteer counselor and training program and Christian, who's been a staff member in our after-school program in summer camp. So mostly I want you to get to hear from them, although I can answer a couple of the questions you guys answered

1 and just to second what other people have said about
2 the impact of some of the changes that were made by
3 DYCD last year in terms of shortening the summer,
4 which definitely had a huge... was a huge detriment to
5 programs that were required to be open by the same
6 agency for seven weeks; in the final week we had no
7 counselors from the Summer Youth Employment Program.
8 We were lucky; you can see how much young people want
9 these opportunities, because a large majority of our
10 SYPs volunteered that last week for no pay because
11 they were committed to the program and the experience
12 of it. And we also had a number of the 14 and 15
13 year olds who were only allowed to work 15 hours a
14 week who volunteered a lot through the summer as
15 well, because they really just wanted the experience
16 and the opportunity, even at the loss of income. So...
17 but I will hand it to you guys.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much.

20 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Well let me start
21 off by saying thank you, Chair and Council Members
22 for taking the time out to listen to us today. My
23 name is Christian, I did prepare testimony that I was
24 gonna read to you guys, but I'd rather... I feel like
25 that can be boring, so I just wanted to ans... I know

1
2 you guys had a few concerns while during the hearing
3 was goin' on, like questions like what was happening
4 to the youth that applied for SYEP and what did they
5 do if they didn't get in and I can tell you firsthand
6 that I was one of the youth who did apply for SYEP a
7 few years back and I kept applying and I was never
8 chosen, but luckily I was able to get employed by
9 Shira at Center for Family Life, which is located in
10 Sunset Park.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So that was last
12 year?

13 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Oh I was employed
14 last year through Shira, yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Through the Summer
16 Youth... [crosstalk]

17 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: No, without SYP,
18 without SYP... [interpose, background comment] Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Through the Summer
20 Youth Program, huh?

21 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: No.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: No. Okay.

23 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Just on my own... I
24 got lucky, I guess you could say.
25

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you never got the opportunity to be part of the Summer Youth Program?

CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: No, never.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: But I just wanted to say that unfortunately not everybody in my position gets that luxury, can like... I remember the first year I applied I wasn't accepted and I basically did what I feel like what any other youth would do in my position, is just hang out and basically just roam the streets and unfortunately not everybody gets as lucky as I am and they wouldn't continue pursuing their... like I personally wanted to work with children, that was my dream, and I was able to get lucky and I was able to basically reach that and I can honestly say that now there's... working where I work, I can hear experiences that my co-workers have from years, past years, about how great it's been at the site and I personally envy their stories and their experiences because those are things that I wish I had growing up as a kid and it's a shame that there's other youth out there who don't get to experience those things and I can honestly say that I feel for those youth, 'cause I've seen what it's like

2 on both sides of the fence you can say and I actually
3 like it on this side much better. So it's just a
4 shame that where... you probably do know, but over
5 1,000 youth who did apply weren't selected and it's
6 just... especially with the... the... I'm sorry; I
7 interrupt someone... especially with the, the minimum
8 wage increase, not even feel you're gonna be selected
9 and I just feel like it sucks, for a lack of better
10 word; it sucks that they don't get the opportunity
11 that I've had and yeah, I guess I'll pass it off to
12 uhm...

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,
14 Mr. Christian. Thank you.

15 CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Thank you.

16 STEPHANIE: My name is Stephanie; I
17 applied for SYEP last summer with my sister; luckily
18 I got accepted to the program but my sister didn't;
19 uhm I... [interpose]

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You.

21 STEPHANIE: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You were not
23 accepted or you were?

24 STEPHANIE: I was accepted.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay.

STEPHANIE: I worked for a summer camp, Center Family Life at PS 169; I was an office counselor; my experience was one of a kind, since it was my first time working and the school... then I worked after school for... no, sorry... I'm so sorry. I got a job offered for my school year to work after school and it was an amazing opportunity for me because I didn't think I was gonna have an opportunity to work for like the school year. I learned so many skills; one of the most important skills I've learned was leadership, which I didn't think I was capable of leading anyone or being the leader, so that's something that I really learned and that's all thanks to SYEP program, because if I wouldn't have applied or gotten into it, I wouldn't have this opportunity to sit here and talk about my experience. That's why I think it's really disappointing that teenagers are not gonna have that opportunity that I had; that's why... to me, SYEP was like my new beginning; I got so many opportunities; now I am an assistant group leader, which I was offered during my school year, this year, actually, so yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very good and
3 congratulations.

4 STEPHANIE: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, great
6 statement.

7 SHIRLEY: Hi; I'm Shirley and you know, I
8 was 14 when I started working at Center for Family
9 Life, through SYEP, and right now... [interpose]

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Through SYEP, right?

11 SHIRLEY: SYEP, yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

13 SHIRLEY: and right now I'm 15 and I can
14 tell you that I'm definitely not the same person I
15 was when I first [background comment] applied for
16 SYEP. You know, over time I had become a more
17 responsible, mature and outspoken person with more
18 experiences to help me prepare for the future and you
19 know as a SYEP, I was only able to work around 15
20 hours a week and you know I still ended up going
21 every single day; you know, why; 'cause I liked it.
22 And I'm still working at Center for Family Life, the
23 after-school program, every day and I'm not getting
24 paid, but you know, I love it, so. You know at first
25 I didn't know what I wanted to do when I grow up, but

1 CFL, Center for Family Life, had helped me realize
2 that working with children is something that I truly
3 enjoy doing and that's probably what I want to do in
4 the future. You know, without SYEP I would probably
5 been sitting at home doing nothing, wasting time,
6 like you know the 100,000 other young people who did
7 not get selected to become an SYEP. And I really
8 wanna share this experience with others, but I don't
9 think that it's gonna happen if the budget does not
10 increase, because the smaller the budget the smaller
11 the number of participants and the smaller chances
12 that people will have. Yeah, so that's about it.

13 [laugh]

14
15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much;
16 you're so great. [laughter] Thank you... [interpose]

17 SHIRA SAMEROFF: We're so lucky to have
18 them.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you. So let
20 me take the opportunity to commend each one of you;
21 thank you so much for being the advocate for those
22 young people who didn't have the opportunity to be
23 accepted or to have job opportunities through the
24 Summer Youth Program, especially Christian; you
25 didn't have the opportunity to have a job through the

1 Summer Youth Program, but you still advocate you know
2 for the young people; this is wonderful, this is
3 great and I commend you for that. And to Stephanie
4 and Shirley, and also I commend you also because now
5 it seems that you have a certain leadership and
6 skills that are very important for now and then for
7 your life. So my question to you; what is the impact
8 of your experience in the Summer Youth Program on
9 your education? Do you believe that motivates you to
10 stay in school; do you believe that your experience
11 in the Summer Youth Program gives you more sense of
12 responsibility? What can you say about that?

14 [background comments]

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Either one, Shirley
16 or Stephanie; do you think that you know the
17 experience has been helpful to you in terms of your
18 education?

19 STEPHANIE: To me, I think the experience
20 has been helpful, because it made me focus more on my
21 school work and it kind of made priority being at
22 school, or like doing more... since we are like... we are
23 representing, we are... we are representing each other
24 to smaller children, so we have to be an example for
25 them, so that made me change the way I did my school

work; I am more organized now; I could definitely say it did change the way I work in school, for more positive change.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Very good.

SHIRLEY: Yeah, I agree with Stephanie, you know how... you know I've definitely changed over time; it helped me in school better, you know I've become a better leader, like in group work; usually I would be the one who wouldn't contribute a lot, but ever since I've gained leadership, that has really helped me in school. And since we're a role model for the kids, you know I would want them to stay in school, so I would probably, you know, motivate myself to stay in school myself and move on to college, into better futures.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: It seems that your experience through the Summer Youth Program was an excellent one, was great, but we know in life there is no 100 percent perfect thing; everything that you are doing, there is always some challenges, something that doesn't work well; is there any challenges that you want to mention, anything that you believe that you should work together to change, to make the Summer Youth better, a more effective and successful

program for the young people? Anything that you believe that we should try to change, to make the Summer Youth more successful and to offer to the young people more opportunities? Christian...

[crosstalk]

CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Well I mean I wasn't... I wasn't chosen for Summer Youth, but I mean, a few things... well again, I don't know much about Summer Youth except for what... [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Let me put it another way. You know, what do you think that we should do to improve the Summer Youth Program? Is anything, yes... [crosstalk]

CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: I don't know... [crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: No, no; I'm sorry, keep go... go ahead. [crosstalk]

CHRISTIAN LANTIGUA: Oh no; I mean I don't have any experience of you know the Summer Youth, but I mean from what I've seen from last year, there was a change within the amount of school weeks that we had... I mean, not school weeks, the amount of weeks, from seven weeks to six weeks, which the... the youth would be employed and I know that affected our

1
2 camp, because I remember the last week of program we
3 were down in numbers, which wouldn't really allow us
4 to take our kids on more trips and according to, I
5 think it was DOH, we're supposed to take a certain
6 amount of chaperones to a certain number of kids and
7 that kinda... that's... that takes away from the
8 experience that the little children can have, because
9 you know the cuts that the Summer Youth made. What
10 else was I gonna say? So I feel like, you know just
11 bringing that back would really not only help the
12 children, but also the youth who are being employed,
13 'cause again, that's more money for them and stuff
14 like that. [interpose]

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So let me ask
16 Shira Sameroff, probably you would be able to answer
17 this question. We know that some of the workers in
18 the Summer Youth Program are non-paid workers, they
19 don't have any salary, they don't receive any pay, so
20 is there at least some credit from... some credit for
21 those young people who are working without pay? Is
22 there any benefit for them?

23 SHIRA SAMEROFF: I think... financial...
24 [interpose]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Besides you know, the skill and the experience and that, yes.

SHIRA SAMEROFF: Right. Right. I mean there were a few... we had a number of people volunteer this summer... I also just wanna say that I think the 100,000 number actually doesn't accurately reflect, because I know so many young people who didn't even bother to apply because it's been so discouraging in past years, so I think the number's actually much higher than that and the application can be confusing and now it's only online, so if they don't have support... our agency offers support to young people, but if they're not connected to an agency they don't even get to figure out how to apply necessarily. But I think for us; I mean we ended up having to... we... not only was there the seventh week and the 14 and 15 year olds were only allowed to work a certain number of days, but they also... we used to have funding to train them before camp, so we have young people who've never worked with children before; we have to train them, so this year we had to ask them to volunteer their time to come to that training because we had no choice; we did take some of our agency money and give stipends, some of us were able to do

that, but it was small stipends just because... just because our budgets are so small, you know as it is that it's hard to find resources internally to pay young people for volunteering.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much; I don't have any more questions, but let me take the opportunity before we leave to thank each one of you and all of you one more time, because I think that it is our responsibility to work together to help our young people and I'm committed to do that and I feel privileged and am blessed to be the chairman of this wonderful committee, because the young people are very close to my heart and I've been working and I spent a lot of years you know helping the young people and I know firsthand the difference that we can make in their life by providing them with the resources, with the opportunities and the skills that they need and I wanted to say that I'm looking forward to working together with all of you, and by working together we're going to make those young people, as I said before, the leaders that they have to be, the best person that they can be in their life and I have many ideas; I'm not going to discuss them now; you will hear from me. We will meet and we'll

strategize together. Thank you very much, may god
bless you; have a wonderful, wonderful day or week;
let's continue to work together. Thank you...

[interpose]

SHIRA SAMEROFF: Thank you so much; it's
wonderful to hear, and you're welcome to come any
time you wanna see them at work to our program...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: No problem; I will
come.

SHIRA SAMEROFF: we'd love to host...

[crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank... and please,
invite me to your events. Alright?

SHIRA SAMEROFF: We would be happy to.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much;
god bless you.

SHIRA SAMEROFF: Great, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

[background comments]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: The meeting is
adjourned. Thank you. [background comments]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 18, 2014