

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

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June 22, 2015  
Start: 12:05 p.m.  
Recess: 3:24 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

CARLOS MENCHACA  
Chairperson

MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO  
Chairperson

INEZ BARRON  
Chairperson

MATHIEU EUGENE  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Daniel Dromm  
Peter A. Koo  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
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David G. Greenfield  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
James Vacca  
Fernando Cabrera  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez

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

Malberto Alinde  
Sunset Park, Brooklyn

Stacie Evans  
Literacy Advisor  
NYC Mayor's Office of Workforce Development

Nisha Agarwal  
Commissioner  
NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Robert Smith  
Professor  
City University of New York, Baruch College

Roberto Guerena [sp?], Director  
Adult Literacy DACA/CUNY Language Immersion Program  
New York City College of Technology/CUNY  
Appearing for Dr. Leslee Oppenheim

Adriana Blancarte-Hayward  
Outreach Manager for Immigrant Affairs  
New York Public Library

Ariana Rosas  
Special Projects Associate  
New York Immigration Coalition

Lawrence Fish, Director  
Adult Education, Vocation Citizenship Services  
Shorefront YMWA

Freddy Acevedo  
Turning Point Student

Irfan Ahmed  
Arab-American Family Support Center

Louis Welz  
Chief Executive Officer  
COJO Flatbush

Nelson Yu  
Director of Adult Education and Immigration  
Queens Community House.

Kevin Douglas  
United Neighborhood Houses of New York

Leah Aber  
Interim Chief Program Officer  
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

David Hunt  
ESL Teacher

Anzardo Jennifer Valdes  
Senior Immigration Attorney  
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation

Sandy Myers  
Associate Director of Government Relations  
UJA Federation

Jocelyn Mendoza  
Student  
Make the Road New York

Sierra Stoneman-Bell  
Director of Adult Education  
Career Pathways at Make the Road New York

Maia Goodell  
MFY Legal Services

Margarita Guerros  
Staff Attorney  
New York Legal Assistance Group



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3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

6

2 [sound check, pause]

3 [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [Speaking Spanish]

5 I am Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the New York City  
6 Council's Committee on Immigration. Before  
7 proceeding, I'd like to introduce the co-chairs of  
8 today's hearing, Council Member Maria Del Carmen  
9 Arroyo, Chair of the Committee on Community  
10 Development; Council Member Inez Barron the Chair of  
11 the Higher Education Committee; and Council Member  
12 Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the Committee on Youth  
13 Services. There are several hearings at the same  
14 time. We are going to be expecting them soon. I'm  
15 really excited that Council Member Del Carmen Arroyo  
16 is here with us today. Now, today our committee and  
17 our committees are holding a timely and important  
18 hearing on how our city is educating our immigrant  
19 communities. We will hear testimony from the  
20 Administration and advocates about the Adult Literacy  
21 Initiative, and the literacy portion of New York  
22 City's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival, DACA  
23 Initiative.

24 We know that language barriers and low  
25 literacy places a significant roadblock in our

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COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

7

communities' ability to achieve financial security,  
and that often it can prevent our residents,  
especially our immigrants from understanding their  
rights. Although literacy is not just an immigrant  
issue, we recognize that often it is the immigrant  
communities who are most affected. We are also--we  
also know that limited English proficiency makes it  
harder for parents to support their children  
academically and engage in school system. And for  
residents to communicate with the police, and  
healthcare professionals, and other critical issues  
affecting their health and security. Every day, New  
Yorkers labor across the city with little hope for  
advancement due to the--due to their limited English  
skills. 1.7 million New York City residents over the  
age of 18 lack English proficiency, a high school  
diploma or both.

At the same time, city funding for  
community-based adult literacy programs--again, I'm  
going to stress that. Community-based adult literacy  
programs were cut drastically during our most recent  
recession has not been restored to meet the need and  
the demand. Existing community-based programs are  
stretched beyond capacity with classes filling up as

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3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

8

5 soon as registration opens. Additionally, at time  
6 when the U.S. Court of Appeals has decided to deny  
7 emergency stay for Deferred Action for Parents of  
8 United States Citizens and Permanent Residents, DAPA  
9 and Expanded DACA, New York City still has the  
10 potential to make meaningful investments to better  
11 the lives of immigrants with their access to  
12 literacy. We have the opportunity to take action  
13 before the legal case moves through the system and to  
14 support this population now, today. Our city's  
15 investment in adult education not only benefits the  
16 learners, but by extension it's benefits their  
17 families, our economy, our society as a whole.

18 While higher education is increasing  
19 necessary to achieve individual financial security  
20 and local economic growth. For many New Yorkers the  
21 pathway to post-secondary success has to start with  
22 basic education, English language literacy and High  
23 School Equivalency preparation. Obtaining even a  
24 high school degree produces economic and social  
25 returns to families and their communities. Median  
wages are 25% higher for adults who are able to  
complete high school or earn a High School  
Equivalency diploma, HSE. And helping adults finish



their primary education better prepares them to enroll in training programs, pursue college or advance in their careers. And these investments pay off for the public as well. Every high school credential earned generated \$324,000 in benefits for the city through reduced reliance on public benefits and increased tax revenue for higher earnings. In New York City even anecdotal data has shown that adults with access to literacy programs have shown increases in job training, job retention, income and even in their participation in their children's schools.

Arguably, one of the most striking statistics has shown a 15% increase in New York State's DACA application rate, a benefit that is increasingly important during a time of uncertainty for our undocumented community. At the City Council, we are clear that a solution to this glaring resource gap--glaring resource gap requires real partnership between our legislative body and the Administration. And today, our communities hope to hear testimony from the Administration about the impact these two initiatives have had on our own communities, as well as our future plans that the Administration has to

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2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

10

2 ensure that our communities still has access to the  
3 resources they need. We also hope to hear from  
4 community advocates and affected individuals today  
5 about the experience of receiving services through  
6 the initiatives and any future needs the community  
7 still faces. I'd like to thank my staff--my staff of  
8 the Immigration Committee who helped put this hearing  
9 together, Catalina Cruz, Muzna Ansari, Ivan Huevanos,  
10 Crilhien Francisco and Vladimir Martinez. I now am  
11 going to hand it over to Co-Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you Mr. Chair  
13 and good morning. Good morning everyone. Welcome to  
14 City Hall on this beautiful almost end of budget day,  
15 right? Don't Tweet anything, please. [laughter]  
16 Thank you, Chair Menchaca, good afternoon and welcome  
17 to our joint hearing. I want to thank Council Member  
18 Menchaca for his leadership on this issue, and  
19 forcing us to come together on the last week of June  
20 to have a conversation that is long overdue given  
21 everything that is being planned in the  
22 Administration. I'm Maria Carmen Del Arroyo, Chair  
23 of the Committee on Community Development, and I  
24 would like to thank my colleagues, the Co-Chairs  
25 Barron and Eugene, and the members of the four

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2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

11

5 committees for coming together to--to participate in  
6 this joint hearing today. And since it's a large  
7 hearing and I think we'll probably have quorum for a  
8 State since we have four large committees together.  
9 I will keep my comments brief.

10 The Committee on Community Development  
11 shares many of the concerns raised by Chair Menchaca,  
12 and we would like to hear the specifics from the  
13 Administration on the City's implementation of the  
14 various adult literacy programs that we fund in our  
15 city. In particular, this committee would like to  
16 better understand several issues. First, how many  
17 New Yorkers qualify for DACA or do we even know? But  
18 the--and--and the concern about how much common sense  
19 there is in a qualification process given the status  
20 of the individuals who have to engage government to  
21 receive the--the services that we can provide to  
22 them. Thirdly, whether the Administration has the  
23 capacity to handle the potential DACA applicants, and  
24 what options, if any, or services are available for  
25 those undocumented individuals who do not qualify for  
DACA. And I would imagine that those are many, and  
also need the services that we can provide in our  
city. We hope this hearing will allow the Council to

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COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

12

better understand some of the hurdles to employment  
faced by the city's immigrant community, and whether  
additional steps can be taken to improve access to  
effective language training programs. I want to  
thank my committee staff for their work in preparing  
for this hearing, Alex Paulenoff, my Committee  
Counsel to my left, Jose Conde, the Policy Analyst  
and Jessica Ackerman, the Fiscal Analyst and the  
Fiscal Analysts were all really, really busy these  
last few weeks crunching the numbers for our budget.  
Thank you all for your work, and now Mr. Chair, I  
have to excuse myself. I have to go vote in the  
Landmarks Committee across the street, but I will  
return.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. We've  
also been joined by Council Member and our other co-  
chair Mathieu Eugene from Brooklyn.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,  
Mr. Menchaca. Thank you. Good afternoon. Is it  
afternoon or morning? Good afternoon. My name is  
Mathieu Eugene, and I'm the Chairman of the Youth  
Services Committee. I'm so please to join today, the  
Committee on Immigration chaired by Council Member  
Carlos Menchaca, and also by the Committee of

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COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

13

Community Development chaired by Council Member Maria  
Del Carmen Arroyo, and the Committee on Higher  
Education chaired by Council Member Inez Barron. New  
York City is such a diverse place, and we are blessed  
to be a city that celebrates all different cultures.  
New York in our neighborhoods have high immigration  
population, and as prior--as the prior Haitian  
immigrant, I'm supporting New York immigrants  
everywhere who are working hard so their families can  
have a better life. In order to ensure that everyone  
can work toward a better future, we must make sure  
that everyone has access to enriching opportunities,  
and that begins with offering English classes to  
everyone who wish to learn the language.

Without this labor [sic] of  
communication, immigrants live in fear everyday, and  
most of them worry about their legal status or that  
oppressive employers will not take advantage of them.  
The one equalizer in our community is education.  
Therefore, the need for other resources and services  
for the true medium for involving New York City  
residents is overwhelming. It is indisputable that  
our City of New York benefits when immigrants obtain  
quality and meaningful educational services as that

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COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

14

is what enables and empowers them. And can lead to  
meaningful and primary opportunities, which in turn  
helps support the city's economy. Our own City  
Comptroller reports that just a few years ago,  
immigrants accounted for \$210 billion in economic  
activities in New York City, or about 31% of Gross  
City Product. Immigrants have built this great--this  
great nation, and immigrants continue to build and to  
bring up this good city on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, without also building  
English proficiency, [sic] immigrants often remain  
trapped in jobs that are failing to provide fair and  
livable wages. Because many are not comfortable or  
embrace that they will not be understood by their  
child--children's teachers, they are too often not  
fully engaged in their children's education.  
Additionally, without English proficiency, many of  
our immigrants may not qualify for any of the already  
affordable federal immigration relief, which would  
act as a temporary safety net as they're--they're  
transitioning into the workforce in the new nation.  
I could go on and elaborate about federal and city  
Immigration Initiative, past and present. But I  
really want to hear from our witnesses. I'm anxious

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2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

15

2 to hear from the Administration and from those who  
3 are personally living through the situation. I want  
4 them to inform us of what's--what is working, what is  
5 not working in the world of other youth services.

6 [sic] To not do everything we can then to assure the  
7 best plan for education, our immigrants and just them  
8 and their families, but really the future of all New  
9 Yorkers. We are not alone. That we should know that  
10 and adapt that in our watch. I would like to think  
11 my Committee Counsel Kimberly Williams and our Policy  
12 Analyst Michael Benjamin, and the wonderful staff and  
13 also my co-chairs who work hard to make this hearing  
14 possible. And especially, thank you to all of you  
15 for being here to testify, and to be part of this  
16 group in our public hearing. Thank you very much.  
17 Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Chair  
19 and I want to acknowledge that we have been joined by  
20 Council Member Williams, Council Member Maisel from  
21 Brooklyn, Council Member Chin from Manhattan and  
22 Council Member Crowley Queens. And now, we're going  
23 to hand it over now to our Co-Chair Council Member  
24 Barron from Brooklyn.

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2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

16

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chair. Good afternoon. I would like to begin by  
7 thanking Council Member Menchaca for calling for this  
8 important hearing on the New York City Adult Literacy  
9 Initiative. I also want to acknowledge the other co-  
10 chairs, Council Member Maria Del Carmen Arroyo and  
11 Council Member Mathieu Eugene. In our regular budget  
12 meetings, we don't always have the opportunity to  
13 examine the broad impact of budget modifications on  
14 citywide initiatives that implicate multiple  
15 agencies. In this instance where the  
16 Administration's reconfiguration of the Adult  
17 Literacy programs offered in conjunction--in  
18 connection with the Deferred Action for Childhood  
19 Arrivals program. I'm glad that we have the  
20 opportunity to review the services the city provides  
21 before any of them sees cuts in this 2016 budget.  
22 The Committee on Higher Education joins this hearing  
23 as we have oversight over the City University of New  
24 York, which provides adult literacy programs on 14 of  
25 its campuses across the five boroughs. CUNY offers  
free English for speaker of other languages, basic  
education, pre-High School Equivalency, High School  
Equivalency, and GED classes. The classes are



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COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

17

offered mornings, evenings and weekends on an ongoing  
basis.

Beginning in 2013, the City Council  
partnered with then Mayor Bloomberg to provide an  
additional \$4.3 million in funding to expand the  
seats available to these CUNY programs to assist DACA  
candidates in meeting their educational requirements.  
While this program continues at CUNY, I'm concerned  
that cutting the budget in other ESL programs will  
increase the demand at CUNY. And that the Council  
will be left to increase funding for the initiatives  
there. Public education is a civil right. It's part  
of the basic bargain programs that the government has  
with other people it governs. I'm always concerned  
about shifting the cost of such programs to the  
Council. I hope that this hearing sheds light on how  
the different parts of the city's integrated  
education initiatives fit together so that we as  
members can be better educated partners with the  
Administration. I would like to recognize the other  
members of the Higher Education Committee. I think  
Council Member Williams was here, and I would like to  
thank my CUNY Liaison and Legislative Direct Indigo  
Washington, and Higher Education staff, Policy

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

18

Analyst Chloe Rivera, final--Finance Analyst Jessica  
Dodson, and Committee Counsel Jeff Campagna. Thank  
you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Chair  
and before we get into our first panel, I just want  
to also welcome our previous chair of the Immigration  
Committee, Council Member Dromm from Queens.  
Welcome, and just a little bit in Spanish, and we're  
going to go into our--our panel. [Speaks Spanish]  
With that, I'm handing it over to our first panel--  
our first panel Malberto Alinde. [sp?] And we can  
have you come over to the front, and get over to the  
desk. [pause] Norberto, right over here. Thank  
you. Thank you so much. First, you hailing from  
Sunset Park. Thank you so much. From Brooklyn and I  
know you're not--you're no stranger to our committee  
hearings, and so I welcome you back.

MALBERTO ALINDE: Hello, everybody. My  
name Malberto Alinde. I'm from Sunset Park,  
Brooklyn. I'm a graduate of Turning Point Education  
Center. My parents came here from Puerto Rico and  
they only spoke Spanish. Their English was very  
limited. I was born her, but in my household we only  
spoke Spanish. So, when I was around five years old

1 until like eight years old I got made fun of because  
2 I didn't know how to speak English that well. Thank  
3 God for ESL classes, resources classes that I got to  
4 learn English pretty fast. So by the time I was in  
5 middle school, I was able to defend myself with the  
6 English language. When I grew up in Sunset Park it  
7 was a really rough neighborhood. It was drug  
8 infested and a lot of alcohol use. There was a lot  
9 of prostitution and single mothers were doing what  
10 they had to do to survive, to give to their children.  
11 By the time I got to high school, I--I joined a gang.  
12 I hung out with drug dealers.

14 I started selling drugs myself. I became  
15 part of a gang because I--I didn't have the family  
16 structure that I wanted to--the family structure that  
17 we ask for, that we should hope for. And they made  
18 me feel like it was a family, and they showed me how  
19 to make money, something I didn't really learn from  
20 my--from my peers. Even though it was illegal, it  
21 was a way for me to eat, buy clothing because I  
22 walked around holes in my sneakers. And, you know,  
23 the same clothes, dirty clothes. I didn't really  
24 have much. So, I got stabbed and I lost all hope  
25 because I lost the feeling to my right hand, and I

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COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

20

just stop going to school. I didn't know where to go, where I was going to wind up or anything. I started working dead-end jobs like security, bouncing, doing construction jobs, you know, odd jobs. In between that point to when I come--came to Turning Point, when I went to Turning Point Education Center, in between that a lot of my friends wound up doing a lot of time in jail like 25 years to life, 15 years to life. You know, ten years.

And also, I have a few friends who also passed away from drugs or selling drugs. They--they got murdered or they overdosed. So then I stepped into Turning Point because I was tired of--I was tired of being with these situations. I was--it wasn't getting better. No matter how much drugs I sold, no matter what gang I was in, no matter what I was doing, it was--it was--there wasn't a future being that way. I seen me winding up in a box or in a cage. So I stepped into Turning Point, and they really helped me. [bell] They helped me gain my confidence. They helped me get my GED, and they helped me with my reading and my writing. I wasn't good at math. They helped me with my math, and I got a lot of help from them, and I got a lot of support

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2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

21

5 from them like a family. They became my new family  
6 instead of my, you know, gang friends or drug dealing  
7 friends. And now I actually go to college, and I go  
8 to Kingsborough. I want to be a political leader, a  
9 community organizer for my community and I'm majoring  
10 in political science. And hopefully I go to Brooklyn  
11 College soon after Kingsborough, and after that  
12 Brooklyn Law School so I can help my community in  
13 Sunset Park and many more of the communities. Thank  
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Orlando, and thank you for your testimony and your  
17 courage and--and you--may you continue to--to succeed  
18 in your--in your future. Thank you so much.

19 MALBERTO ALINDE: Thank you. I will.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. And  
21 as, you know, as that--that testimony continues I'm  
22 just going to settle. I'm going to ask the  
23 Administration to come up and take the--the desk.  
24 Commissioner Nisha Agarwal and Ms. Stacie Evans from  
25 the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development.

[background noise]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we've also  
been joined by Council Member Koo from Queens.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

22

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: I'm going to administer  
6 the oath. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
7 truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony  
8 before this committee, and to respond honestly to  
9 council member questions?

10 STACIE EVANS: I do.

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

12 STACIE EVANS: Before I start, one of  
13 those truths was that Norberto was a student of mine  
14 years ago. So it thrills me that he is here.

15 [laughs]

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: One big family.

17 STACIE EVANS: Good afternoon,  
18 Chairperson Menchaca, Chairperson Arroyo, Chairperson  
19 Eugene and Chairperson Barron and members of the City  
20 Council Committees on Immigration, Community  
21 Development, Youth Services and Higher Education.  
22 I'm Stacie Evans, Literacy Advisor in the Mayor's  
23 Office of Workforce Development. My job is to  
24 support, strengthen and expand New York City's Adult  
25 Education System. Thank you for the opportunity to  
speak with you today about education opportunities  
for adult immigrants. As a former adult literacy  
instructor program director for over 25 years in the

field, I thank the Council for its ongoing focus on adult literacy. In April, 2014, the Mayor established the Office of Workforce Development to coordinate the city's workforce initiatives. He convened the Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force to articulate Workforce system goals. From the outset, Mayor wanted to ensure that the city's annual workforce budget was being strategically invested in programs that would increase economic opportunity, improve job quality at the low end of the wage spectrum and deliver higher quality service by aligning agency resources.

Achieving these objectives will increase stability and enable mobility for countless workers in New York City while providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need to grow and thrive in New York City. In November, the Mayor released *Career Pathways: One City Working Together*, which outlined ten recommendations to fulfill his workforce system vision. The Mayor's goal is to building the workforce system's coordination and capacity so that we are training 30,000 New Yorkers a year by 2020, building a strong resilient workforce supported by a robust and flexible array of education and training

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

24

5 programs and services. Adult literacy plays an  
6 important role in the city's new vision for the  
7 system, which I will discuss in a moment. The  
8 Mayor's Office for Workforce Development is tasked  
9 with implementing the Mayor's Careers Pathways Plan.  
10 Working with 12 city agency partners as well as  
11 employers, labor, education and training providers,  
12 the Workforce Investment Board, philanthropy and  
13 community stakeholders to create a workforce system  
14 that more effectively meets the education, training  
15 and employment needs of city residents.

16 WKDEV's goals are to build skills  
17 employers seek, improve job quality and increase  
18 system and quality coordination. Achieving these  
19 goals will increase stability and mobility  
20 opportunities for city residents while providing  
21 employers with the homegrown talent they need. WKDEV  
22 adds value to the system realignment process through  
23 our focus on coordination, aligning city workforce  
24 programs around the common goal of improving job  
25 outcomes and providing higher quality services that  
speak to the specific needs of different populations.  
The problem the city faces is large. 1.7 million New  
Yorkers over the age of 18 lack English proficiency



or a high school diploma. Twenty-five percent of HRA's Back to Work participants test between 7th and 10th grade level. Up to 30% of DYCDs have a school youth population who test between 5th and 7th grade level. The individuals need access to language and literacy programs in order to gain the skills that will enable them to obtain family sustaining jobs, pursue their career goals, and take a more active and integrated part in the life and forward movement of our city.

The Council has been an important partner in ensuring the availability of programs and services to meet these residents' education and training need. And we look forward to continuing this partnership. The current adult literacy landscape includes programs and services offered through the City University of New York, the Department of Education, the many community-based programs that contract with the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the city's three library systems. Funding to support those programs come from city, state and federal funding streams as well as the generous support from private foundations. In addition to enabling participants to more effectively navigate

city systems and become more active community members, these programs are critical first steps toward college and career attainment and long-term employment success. Services offered include English for Speakers of other Languages, ESOL. These classes serve primarily immigrant youth and adult who need to develop their facility and fluency in English. Young Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education. These classes provide basic skills instruction for youth and adults with reading and math levels below 9th grade.

High School Equivalency or HSE. These classes for youth and adults with 10th grade to 12th reading and math levels prepare students to take the TASC exam, formerly the GED, and receive their HSE diploma. Out of School Youth, or OSY, these programs for 16 to 24-year-olds offer a variety of services including ABE and HSE classes. Literacy Zones. There are 15 Literacy Zone projects in New York City. These programs are part of the statewide initiative to close the achievement gap in communities of concentrated poverty and high concentrations of families and individuals with limited literacy or English proficiency. Literacy Zones provide a

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

27

continuum of literacy services from early childhood  
through adult education with services tailored to  
meet the needs of the community. There are excellent  
programs offering these services across the city.

Make the Road New York, for example, offers  
programming in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island,  
including a Spanish Language HSE program and a  
community health worker training program.

Riverside Language Program provides  
English language instruction to residents from across  
the city, and professional development to ESOL  
providers from across the city and state. The  
Fortune Society in Long Island City supports the  
academic advancement and successful re-entry of  
formerly incarcerated adults. In the Bronx, the Door  
runs the Bronx Youth Center, a program that has  
launched the basic education Tech Training Program in  
partnership with Priscolas. In Sunset Park, Turning  
Point, Lutheran Family Health Centers' Opportunities  
for a Better Tomorrow and the Center for Family Life.  
In Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development  
Corporation work together to provide a range of  
education, training and wraparound supports for the  
educational and career advancement for out-of-school

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

28

youth. The system serves roughly 80,000 New Yorkers  
at an investment of approximately \$85 million.

Through analysis of those numbers, we see that the  
lion share of adult literacy programming is supported  
by non-city sources.

Programs administered through the  
Department of Education's Office of Adult and  
Continuing Education, for example, make up the  
largest piece of the adult literacy system. Funding  
for those classes comes primarily from the State  
Education Department's Employment Preparation,  
Education funding. Not from City funding sources.  
The Department of Youth and Community Development,  
DYCD, offers ESOL, ADE and HSE programs that are  
directly funded by the city. In FY16, DYCD projects  
serving more than 8,800 youth and adults in 95  
programs contracted through community-based providers  
in all boroughs. DYCD's program budget is \$24.4  
million. The Career Pathways model can help us serve  
adult learners more effectively, and support learners  
in moving more quickly through the system, and toward  
the achievement of their goals. The primary  
mechanism for that shortened time between program

enrollment and education and employment outcome is  
Bridge programming.

Coordinating the development and the  
implementation of Bridge programs is one of the key  
initiatives I'm focused on as Literacy Advisor.  
Integration of adult education with occupational  
training and post-secondary education through the  
implementation of bridge programs will increase the  
return on investment for both funders and  
participants. Bridge programs differ from  
traditional adult literacy programs. Their work  
extends beyond English proficiency and the attainment  
of a high school credential. Bridge programs prepare  
educational instruction with a workforce or career  
focus to connect low-literacy youth and adults to  
clearly defined education and/or employment outcomes  
such as HSE programs, college, occupational training  
or employment. Bridge programs have three core  
components: Sector focused basic skills instruction  
including partnership with employers and/or higher  
education providers. Strong hand-offs between the  
basic education provider and the destination program.  
And support services including college and career  
counseling and transition support.

Integrated or contextualized education allows students with lower levels of proficiency to engage with job or sector focused material early. There's no need to complete their HSE before taking on that more specialized instruction. In this way, learners move toward education and employment goals concurrently. The flexibility built into the bridge model means that programs can be designed to serve learners at all levels. I created a health careers training program in Sunset Park, for example, that was developed for English language learners and low-level basic education students. The program led to industry recognized certifications, and positions as certified nursing assistants, pharmacy technicians or medical office associates. Bridge is an evidence informed program model. La Guardia Community College's Bridge Program was the focus of an MDRC research evaluation that highlights the value of Bridge.

La Guardia's GED Bridge Program, which has since grown and expanded into the College and Careers Pathway Institute, was designed for low-income individuals who did not have a high school diploma or GED. Key findings of the MDRC study

include stronger rates of program completion.

Students in the GED Bridge group completed the class at a significantly higher rate than students in the traditional GED prep class, 68% compared with 47%.

Higher rates of GED exam success. Bridge students were more than twice as likely to pass the GED exam as prep class students, with 53% passing the exam compared with 22% of the prep class students. Higher rates of post-secondary enrollment. Bridge students were more than three times as likely to enroll in CUNY as prep class students. Our focus on Bridge is a focus on developing a system that supports life long learning and career advancement, making economic mobility a reality for residents with limited skill attainment. We are partnering in this work with CEO and DYCD who are developing the first city funded Bridge pilot, set to launch in FY16.

The program will work with 16 provider organization, and will reshape existing young adult literacy programs. CEO will also conduct a random assignment and evaluation of this pilot, and use the lessons learned to support the successful rollout of Bridge classes across the provider community. As part of the larger Bridge initiatives, CEO, CUNY and

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

32

WKDEV have just launched Building Bridges, a month long professional development series on Bridge program design. A week ago, more than 125 staff from the adult education and training programs came together for the kickoff session. Bridge is the foundation of a strong career pathway. As such, we are committed to robust and intentional support of organization and agencies implementing Bridget. CEO is developing ongoing specialized technical assistance for agencies and organizations launching new classes. In closing, we look forward to working with the Council on our shared goal of creating and supporting education and training services for high need youth and adults. Thank you for the opportunity to address these committees.

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you to Committee Chair Menchaca and the members of the Committee on Immigration, to Committee Chair Barron and the members of the Committee on Higher Education, to Committee Chair Arroyo and the members of the Committee on Community Development, and to Committee Chair Eugene and the members of the Committee on Youth Services. As Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, I work on policies and



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

33

programs that promote the wellbeing of immigrants in  
New York City and facilitate the successful economic,  
social, and civic integration. Towards these ends,  
my office works on programs that support English  
language learning and educational opportunities for  
immigrants. I thank the Council for this opportunity  
to discuss this work.

The first program I want to discuss is We  
Are New York known as WANY. The Mayor's Office of  
Immigrant Affairs is the home of WANY, An Emmy award  
winning educational TV series that is based on true  
to life stories of immigrants making their way in New  
York City. Each episode teaches English and  
highlights different aspects of civic engagement so  
that individuals learn English as well as use  
important information about essential city services,  
and how people working across different communities  
can access resources and solve common problems. To  
complement the WANY episodes, MOIA has also developed  
a robust 10-week curriculum with a study guide and a  
facilitator's guide. WANY has been used widely  
throughout the city's adult education system to help  
tens of thousands of New Yorkers improve their  
English. In addition to offering videos and a

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

34

2 conversational English curriculum, WANY also supports  
3 grassroots organizations within immigrant  
4 communities.

5           Community-based organizations, cultural  
6 institutions, labor unions and many other  
7 organizations have hosted WANY classes. Such a  
8 community-based approach to education and information  
9 sharing is consistent with the de Blasio  
10 Administration's overall approach to outreach and  
11 engagement. I am also happy for the opportunity to  
12 discuss the second program I want to cover in my  
13 testimony today, MOIA's DACA education initiative,  
14 which is a part of our larger local program to  
15 implement the president's Executive Action on  
16 immigration. MOIA is designing a model for this  
17 program in partnership with the Human Resources  
18 Administration, HRA, who is helping to administer it  
19 by a sustainable procurement process. One of MOIA's  
20 key priorities is to support legal and community  
21 services for immigrants at scale so that the maximum  
22 number of New York City residents can obtain safe,  
23 high quality information and assistance about their  
24 immigration options.

25

In MOIA's work on Executive Action, we are designing and implementing models for connecting with immigrants who may be eligible for immigration relief under the current Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA program. As well as immigrants who may be eligible for the Expanded DACA, which was announced by the White House last year. Or, the DAPA program for the Parents of U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents, also announced by the White House last year as well as other forms of immigration relief. The DACA Education Initiative will refocus on immigrant New Yorkers who may be eligible for DACA and Expanded DACA, but cannot establish eligibility because they do not yet meet the educational requirement. Through this program, the city has the opportunity to improve access to educational and vocational programming and immigration legal services for some of the city's most vulnerable communities.

In New York City, as is the case in other municipalities across the country, the demographic reality is such that this initiative will not only help qualify individuals for relief, but also has the potential to support their economic advancement in the local workforce. Mayor de Blasio and the entire

Administration are firmly committed to help the thousands of youth and young adults who may be eligible for DACA, but for their need to enroll in educational programming as we implement our broader administrative relief program. We have learned from the City Council programs that was developed in 2012 with the start of the DACA program, and now we're looking forward to working together to help move DACA eligible New Yorkers to participate more fully in the city's social and economic life. And first I'll just give a little bit of background on the executive action and the citywide response. On June 15th, 2012, President Obama announced DACA. The program offers an opportunity for certain undocumented young people who meet the program's residence and educational requirements to obtain a work permit and gain relief from deportation.

New York City was estimated to have a large number of individuals who would be eligible for DACA. However, New York saw lower rates of DACA applications than we initially anticipated. In fact, according to the Migration Policy Institute, as of March 2014, New York State had a total application rate of 49% compared to the national total of 55%

among the immediately DACA eligible population. It failed to include both potentially eligible and immediately eligible populations meaning individuals who would qualify for DACA if they met the educational requirement in addition to those who already had met the educational requirement. Then the application rate falls to 37% in New York State. This rate is also the same rate of uptick across the country for the potentially eligible and immediately eligible individuals. A fact, which reinforces the observation made by practitioners nationwide that educational attainment is among the barriers that have contributed to the most low application rates.

In November 2014, President Obama took new steps to address our broken immigration system, and announced that he would use his executive authority to expand DACA and create another program to provide relief for the parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. The expanded DACA program will increase access to the program by eliminating the age cap and reducing the period for which this population must provide their proof of residency. The President's executive action is projected offer relief to millions of undocumented

immigrants nationwide. We estimate that in our city alone administrative relief will positively impact approximately 200 to 230,000 undocumented New Yorkers. Despite the entry of a temporary preliminary injunction on the implementation of Expanded DACA and DAPA, it remains a priority for the Mayor to prepare the city's coordinated response. MOIA is moving forward to pull together a large scale citywide response involving city agencies, legal service providers, and community-based organizations. The model will include a public education campaign, coordinated legal services delivery, mass outreach efforts in targeted communities, screenings for eligibility, legal service referrals and linkages to ancillary benefits such as IDNYC. As part of these efforts, we will incorporate the DACA Educational Initiative into the broader model for executive action. It is important to note that the federal ruling does not affect the existing DACA program, but came about in 2012. Individuals may continue to come forward and request an initial grant of DACA or renewal of DACA pursuant to the guidelines established in 2012. As such, it is even more critical that we continue to move forward with our

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

39

plans to conduct--to connect immigrants with legal services and access to educational and vocational training through our service delivery model including the DACA Education Initiative. Through this model, we seek to offer tailored educational and vocational training services directly to otherwise DACA eligible populations who need them. Our approach to the DACA and Education Initiative is informed by new research and data about the key challenges that face this hard to reach population. Since DACA was announced over three years ago, MOIA has been able to better study the program and understand the MOIA application rate among New Yorkers. In coordination with the Poverty Research Unit at the Mayor's Office of Operations, and ongoing conversations with community-based organizations and other partners in the field, we have found that the needs of the DACA population that have already applied are very different from the needs of individuals--individuals who have not yet applied for DACA, but are potentially eligible. For the purposes of today's discussion, when I referred to potentially DACA eligible individuals, I am describing those that meet the age and residence requirements of the 2012 DACA Program or Expanded

DACA, but do not currently meet the educational requirement. We estimate that in addition to the 75 to 85,000 potential DACA recipients in New York City, there are approximately 24,100 New Yorkers who may be eligible for original and expanded DACA, but for their ability to meet the educational requirement.

According to the American Community survey data, as further analyzed by the Center for Economic Opportunity, we have found that potentially DACA eligible individuals are among the most vulnerable and isolated immigrants in our city. Many of these individuals are much older than most DACA applicants, between the ages of 25 and 34. According to a 2014 report published by the Brookings Policy Program, more than half or 54% of all DACA applicants that filed were under the age of 21. This is important because researchers have found that the older the individual, the more likely they are to feel unsafe by submitting an application for DACA. Moreover, compared to the immediately DACA eligible profile this population is more likely to lack English proficiency, have less than an 8th graded education level, and already be in the workforce. In fact, 82% of the potentially DACA eligible population



is limited English proficient compared to the 43% of the DACA eligible total. And 72% of the potentially DACA eligible population is already employed in the workforce. This number is remarkably highly compared to the 57% of the working age population that is employed citywide. In terms of geography throughout the five boroughs, the vast majority, over 65% live in either Brooklyn or Queens and nearly a quarter reside in the Bronx.

Among the challenges facing legal services and education providers it has been incredibly difficult to engage these harder to reach individuals who may be eligible for DACA that are older and have significant gaps in their education. Through ongoing conversations with community leaders, we have been able to learn even more about this group's specific hurdles. For example, after their arrival to the United States, many arrived with an enormous amount of debt from migration trip, and subsequently went straight into the workforce. Many entered into survival jobs such as delivery work, house cleaning, low wage, restaurant and construction work and other occupations characterized by low pay and long hours that make it extremely difficult for

workers to find time to attend classes. This in turn forces them to weigh the incentive of getting a two-year work permit through DACA against the fact that they are already working.

Finally, other than factors such as employment, parenting and other responsibilities, that pose high hurdles to returning to education and training programs, many individuals who are potentially eligible for DACA simply do not know that they may qualify for immigration relief. Given the lack of educational attainment, and older age, this population may not readily identify with the common dreamer profile. And as a result, may not self-identify as potentially eligible for DACA. When all of these factors are pulled together, it results in a population that is extraordinarily and uniquely difficult to reach. To address this challenge, MOIA will update the program design utilized by DYCD under the Council's 2012 DACA program, and tailor it to new research and data about this population. We are committed to fitting educational and vocational programming into the context of our broader executive action model.

Through this approach we plan to connect literacy and other qualifying educational or vocational training directly to potentially DACA-- potentially eligible DACA individuals instead of funding general literacy seats with the hope that DACA clients will come forward. Within this new model in addition to legal help, we will provide more tailored outreach, workforce and support services navigation and case management to assist individuals over--to overcome barriers to educational and career advancement. For outreach we will leverage the connections that the dedicated team of community organizers for IDNYC and Executive Action have established ,and are continuing to strengthen with trusted community groups, faith based institutions and other leaders in immigrant neighborhoods. Through these connections, as well as the larger outreach plan we are developing with community partners across the city, we can develop a targeted outreach strategy to reach individuals who may otherwise be very hard to reach.

We will also conduct a public education campaign that will incorporate messaging about the benefits of DACA, such as a work permit, a Social

Security number, eligibility for the earned income tax credit, a driver's license and Workforce 1 services among other benefits. These outreach and marketing efforts can help direct individuals to education and legal services. Additionally, the educational programming must be specifically crafted to the potentially DACA eligible populations so that they not only receive the English or other educational and vocational programming that is necessary for DACA eligibility. But that they also receive the training and support they need to ultimately succeed in their integration and career pathways. To help individuals find and make time for educational courses, which may take months, while juggling work and personal responsibility, our proposed service model will feature stronger links to wrap around services such as case management, navigation support to help immigrants address barriers and get on a path to success.

As well as potentially using more flexible means of delivering instruction in traditional classroom programs. When New York City-- with New York City at the forefront of national immigration reform and inclusion, we believe that the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

45

city can spearhead this model for educational programming that will be positively transformative for potentially DACA eligible immigrants. Bringing individuals out of the shadow and providing access to work authorization, better jobs, potentially health insurance and other social benefits, will help address many facets of inequality faced by this population. MOIA looks forward to working with the Council, partners in community-based organizations and the advocacy community to continue learning about the needs of potentially eligible DACA New Yorkers. And how the City can better reach and serve this population. We agree on the critical importance of this work, and the city's role in lifting up this program. MOIA and the de Blasio Administration remain committed to enhancing the educational opportunities of immigrants and empowering them to succeed. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address these committees.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for both of your testimony, and we're going to go through a round of council member questions and I'm going to clock on that's five minutes. But I'm going to ask a few questions just to get us started. One, I'm going

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

46

5 to just point out a couple pieces here that Mayor  
6 talked to the links between our communities that  
7 we're trying to outreach. The fear of the  
8 potentially eligible DACA recipients and the learning  
9 that you've done over the last two years for the--the  
10 big funding of \$18 million that was put out there.  
11 So in all that, can you now tell us of the vision?  
12 It sounds like we have--we have--we have all the kind  
13 of criteria for the work that's ahead of us. But  
14 really in this next version of funding and we're in  
15 the middle of budget season right now. But even just  
16 moving the budget season alone, and just kind of  
17 thinking about how the Workforce Development work  
18 that you see the administration realigning, and then  
19 what I want to add to that is HRA taking all the  
20 legal services out of DACA, and the evolution of DACA  
21 as an initiative for the city. How all that--we can  
22 just kind of clarify it with the--with the vision for  
23 the Administration as we understand the links between  
24 legal services and educational opportunities.

25 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Just kind of  
unpack that for this first.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

47

5 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So maybe  
6 I'll start. So the--with respect to the DACA program  
7 in particular, the--all of NYLAG and most of the  
8 legal services--civil legal services programs in the  
9 city are--are under HRA, and they have been a very  
10 good partner for us in a number of initiatives  
11 including Immigration legal services through the  
12 Executive Action Program. And so, to the extent that  
13 the Literacy Program Funding as well that I just  
14 spoke about is connected to the ability to get an  
15 immigration legal benefit like DACA, that's also a--a  
16 funding stream that HRA will help us administer. And  
17 in some ways the sort of DACA funding is part of that  
18 larger stream of literacy funding that Stacie spoke  
19 about. But it's a component of it that's really  
20 connected to the legal benefits with respect to DACA.  
21 And our visions for moving forward from what we have  
22 learned really from the last two years of DACA  
23 implementation is to really augment outreach in  
24 general for Executive Action right. As some sort of  
25 colleagues have said expand the funnel of who gets  
touched with information about Executive Action  
programs. And so our hope is through that outreach  
hit, you know, to be able to reach 200,000 or even

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

48

5 more individuals with information. And then to be  
6 able to provide large scale on services. And that  
7 kind of targeted outreach, which we've done very  
8 successfully with IDNYC--

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Uh-  
10 huh.

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --is what we're  
12 going to use for Executive Action as well with the  
13 goal of being able to reach obviously the--the bulk  
14 of the individuals who may be eligible for programs  
15 like DACA and DAPA, but also these hardest to reach  
16 individuals. Be able to identify them as potentially  
17 eligible DACA recipients and then connect to  
18 education--educational programs they need.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So it sounds like  
20 outreach is an important piece. Who will be doing  
21 that outreach in--under your vision?

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah. So we have  
23 been working very closely with a number of different  
24 community-based partners around the city to develop  
25 and outreach, and it will have a number of different  
components. One will be marketing and sort of public  
outreach in the manner of IDNYC with the transits ads  
and things like that, which MOIA will lead. In



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

49

5 addition, we'll have our own outreach team, which  
6 started for IDNYC and has doubled. We'll focus on  
7 developing relationships in--in neighborhoods around  
8 the city, with faith communities, community-based  
9 organizations, et cetera. As well, we'll allocate  
10 our own staff resources to it. And then we'll be  
11 partnering with and contracting with community-based  
12 providers around the city as well to help with CBO  
13 navigation and outreach. So it will be very multi-  
14 faceted.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: What value do  
16 small based--small community-based organizations have  
17 in this plan of yours?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: We are looking to  
19 really partner with all the different types of  
20 providers and community-based organizations that are  
21 in the city very comparably--again I think we've  
22 learned a lot from the IDNYC program--to make sure  
23 that we can reach the hardest to reach populations as  
24 well as folks across the board.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, you know, one  
of the things that we've been hearing a lot in the  
shifts, I know there's a baseline conversation that  
we're happy--having--having right now with

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

50

organizations that were previously funded by the  
Council. And now that the Administration and  
agencies are taking lead, have kind of left out a lot  
of smaller based community organizations. And so, I  
guess I'm trying--going back to that original  
question--how--how much do we value. We're already  
seeing a shift in focus for funding for organizations  
that can create that relationship with our vulnerable  
communities, and the immigrant communities. And so  
how does--how do you reconcile the kind of shifts  
that we're already seeing in the new changes for--for  
the Administration?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Well, I think, you  
know, we're still in the middle of the budget  
discussions and obviously talking with Council about  
the sort of funding. So I, you know, I'm not totally  
sure about the changes that we're talking about, but  
certainly with respect to our Executive Action  
program there will be support in the outreach phase  
for a range of different community-based  
organizations. Which, you know, our support that was  
outlined in the Executive Budget for Executive Action  
with the largest investment by a local government in  
Executive Action in the country. And so, I think

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

51

that's a signal of how much we value, and it has--the plan has been developed all along in consultation and close collaboration with community partners. And certainly depends on the participation of those community partners across the city for its-- But it's hard to say exactly whom and how it will be funded right now because we haven't finished the budget process, and haven't really unrolled the program.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Well, and I think we're going to get some more specific conversations, but I just wanted to open that up. And then I can get a little bit more on the Building Bridges Project. I'm really thinking--thinking about a particular focus on the outreach to immigrant providers or community members. And, if you could kind of talk a little bit about any--any kind of particular outreach that would--that's focused on the immigrant community.

STACIE EVANS: Sure. So the initial outreach to encourage organizations to send staff to participate in Building Bridges was done through CEO, through my office and through DYCD, and it went out and actually through Ginny [sic]. So it went out to the various folks who are connected to--to all of us.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

52

2 And we actually had many more people apply than we  
3 had room for in the training. So we may talk about  
4 doing a second--a second iteration. But right now we  
5 have 125 staff from a lot of different organizations  
6 going through, and organizations of all different  
7 sizes are going through that training.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's just--  
9 that's just the--the collective, but is there--is  
10 there anything specific with mandates for your  
11 communities, or is this--it sounds like an open call.

12 STACIE EVANS: It was an open call,  
13 absolutely. There wasn't a specific call to folks  
14 who are serving immigrants. However, because we know  
15 that immigrants are involved in pretty much every  
16 program that we're working with. Even if those  
17 programs don't offer English classes, immigrants are  
18 enrolled ABE classes, in agency classes. They're  
19 already connected in all of those programs. So if  
20 we're working with a broad swath of the adult ed  
21 provider population, we are probably serving a large  
22 number of immigrants.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, and--and I  
24 think what this is showing is not on the--the  
25 necessity for concentration to our immigrant

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

53

community, but also the measurement of success. And  
so, I'm hoping that we can work together to kind of  
build in--so--so we turn open calls into--into  
targeted calls for immigrant community-based  
organizations that don't always connect to the big--  
kind of the big agency calls that have huge impact on  
the community. And that goes back to the original  
question about how we value each of these  
organizations on the ground. That needs to be  
connected at every level. Not just in hopes of the  
big net, but really a kind of concentrated effort in  
connection. And as IDNYC continues to show us, is  
that whenever we do that--that work we--we land on--  
on years of foundation building in our communities.  
I think that's the main point that I want to--it's  
the first main point for today's hearing. But I am  
now going to hand it over to my Co-Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Mr.

Chair. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank  
you for being here and for your testimony. I'm going  
to focus my--my questions around transition and I--we  
have the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and the  
Mayor's Office of Workforce Development here. Who  
are your sister agencies, and you're not an agency.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

54

I'm trying to understand the difference between DYCD,  
HRA and the Mayor's Office of whatever. Who are your  
agencies that play a role in the integration of this  
transfer of adult literacy and legal services to HRA?  
Are they in the room with you?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So, yeah.

[laughs] We have HRA here present for--

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] DYCD  
is not here?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: DYCD is not here.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. I want to  
know why? The--the--my biggest concern about the  
transfer of a function is always that transition and  
whether we can execute that transition successfully.  
And by successfully, I mean that those who would need  
to access services, do not see the difference. How  
much the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs  
oversight and power do you have in ensuring that HRA  
and DYCD are executing that transition successfully?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, it's an  
excellent question.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And who do you  
complain to if they don't.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

55

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, so it's an excellent question, and we have been in very active conversation over the last several months with HRA and DYCD in this question of transition and how to ensure that there isn't a disruption of services. And what I can say with confidences is that those conversations are ongoing despite sort of who's here at the--at the hearing.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I know so.

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: And we have seen the successful transition of the legal services contracts, for example, and the effective baselining of programs like the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, and I think that's a signal of sort of what's to come even with the transition of some of these DACA literacy dollars to HRA, which will help administer them. And in many ways, you know, I'm here and Stacie is here as a representative of the Administration as a whole. Not necessarily for our specific agencies, and whether it's IDNYC or it's other programs, we've had an incredible experience working very collaboratively on multi-agency large initiatives like this one. And I think successfully being able to come to the table together and ensuring

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

56

2 that the outcome is effective. And that if a  
3 community has a concern, they can come to anyone of  
4 us, and we'll all sort of address it collectively.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I, you know, not  
6 knowing who the boss is, is a problem for me, really.  
7 Because at the end of the day, people do what you  
8 inspect, not what you expect. And having such a  
9 critical service split between two different  
10 agencies, and at the end of the day on ground they  
11 seem to accomplish the same thing: Educate adults  
12 and be able to prepare them meaningful employment  
13 that's going to help them take care of themselves and  
14 their families. Because at the end of the day, that  
15 is what our responsibility is regardless of what  
16 status they have. You know, because I would imagine  
17 the 1.7 million that Stacie spoke about was the  
18 percentage of immigrants and that number. And how  
19 many are natural citizens who don't have the literacy  
20 capacity to be able to graduate from high school? So  
21 at the end of the day, the status or--I don't want to  
22 label it anything. They are people in need who need  
23 to access services at the community level, and I will  
24 echo Mr. Chairman's concern how is this transition  
25 going to roll out? And what is it going to look like



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

57

in the community when someone comes into a provider's  
office to enroll for a program? When education  
programs are the biggest barrier for those who would  
potentially be eligible to apply for DACA? I'm  
concerned. I'm really worried and I--I'm--the--the  
office--the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs what  
your staffing pattern? How many people do you have  
in the office? Do you have the capacity to oversee  
this transition?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So I can  
speak to that. Executive Action of the Mayor has  
tasked us with developing the citywide coordinated  
response that I described. And in furtherance of  
that goal, we've been able to expand our staffing for  
Executive Action across the board both to hire an  
Executive Director who oversees the program, an  
Operations Director who can help with management of  
things like procurement. A Volunteer Manager as well  
as pretty significant outreach team. So we've  
developed a team focused specifically on that . And  
then we have been working closely with HRA on IDNYC  
and now on Executive Action to ensure that these  
transitions occur.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

58

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So you can help me  
6 with--how many funding lines do you have in your  
7 office, and do you have any staff from HRA or DYCD  
8 assigned to your office that are part of this  
9 coordination?

10 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes, so we have--

11 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] Give  
12 me the numbers.

13 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So we have a staff  
14 of I would say at this point now of just under 50, a  
15 piece of which is the Executive Action team that I  
16 mentioned and the outreach team that I mentioned.

17 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: In your office?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: In my office.

19 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: And then those--we  
21 also have staff from HRA that are assigned to work  
22 with us, and who we collaborate with very closely on--  
23 -

24 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing]  
25 Physically located in your office?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Some who are  
physically located in our office--

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

59

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] How  
6 many?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --and some who  
8 are-- I will have to get the numbers. I can get  
9 back to you on the specific numbers.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And the same for  
11 DYCD.

12 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Not for DYCD.

13 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Why not?

14 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Because HRA is our  
15 collaborator on Executive Action, and so we have  
16 staff who are partners that are placed within MOIA  
17 for that.

18 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And--and the--the  
19 adult literacy that remains in DYCD, they're not  
20 reaching immigrants?

21 STACIE EVANS: They are definitely  
22 reaching immigrants.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So, why isn't there  
24 that collaboration then with DYCD?

25 STACIE EVANS: A collaboration with--

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] DYCD?

STACIE EVANS: --MOIA and the transition?

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Uh-huh.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

60

5 STACIE EVANS: I think we would have to  
6 absolutely--

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing] I  
8 can speak to that. So our--our component of the  
9 literacy that we're working on is strictly the  
10 literacy related to DACA, which is the Executive  
11 Action program, and all of the other literacy  
12 programming remains with DYCD. We don't need to--  
13 we're not managing or administration the many  
14 millions of dollars that they've invested in literacy  
15 programs.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So you're only  
17 focused on DACA? What about the other individuals in  
18 our city who may not be eligible for DACA who need  
19 the services from your office?

20 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Those programs  
21 remain within DYCD's administration, and they  
22 continue as Stacie mentioned to be administered by  
23 DYCD. We work with them. We collaborate with them  
24 on ensuring that those programs reach immigrant  
25 communities effectively. But they are not directly  
within our control and administration in the same way  
that the DACA education initiative is.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

61

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay, I'm--I'm a  
very visual person. So at some point we're going to  
need to come together, and you're going to draw a  
little chart--

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]  
Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: --of how those  
things connect. Whether or not your focus is on what  
DYCD services--DYCD is contracting for. At the end  
of the day, they're reaching the same population in  
different ways for different reasons because the  
funder providers by DYCD may have a stronger  
connection in the community. And at the end of the  
day, the immigrant population, especially those that  
are not documented are going to be very suspicious of  
government agencies and/or offices. It wasn't until  
CUNY Citizenship program put an attorney in my office  
two days a week that we started to see in my office  
where we don't report anybody's status. People need  
to know that it's a safe place for them to come. We  
were not seeing the immigrant community coming into  
our office for services regardless of what their  
needs are, and we know that they're very complicated  
needs. So, I'm--I'm not happy with the transition.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

62

I firmly believe that if it ain't broke you don't try to fix it, and that at the end of the day the services provided by our local providers in the community must remain supported through whatever efforts and funding streams our city can make available. So, I understand that most of the funding is state funded and/or some other source. But at the end of the day, they're here in our city. And you are responsible for making sure that we can coordinate the services they need well, and that at the end of the day we graduate people from high school. We get them trained and help them become citizens because we want to make sure that all of those people that work in the city get the benefits they deserve. They do not get exploited by workers. You know, one of the things that I'm thinking as I was reading and hearing your testimony is maybe we should be providing English classes in the restaurants where they work in the morning. And maybe we can engage the employers to let us come in and set up a little classroom, and offer these classes a couple of days a week. In order for that population that's going to have that challenge of the

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

63

2 educational requirement to help them meet that. You  
3 know, we need to think a little bit outside the box.

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: I totally agree  
5 with that. I'd be very happy to provide a chart for  
6 you afterwards of how the--the division of  
7 responsibility is broken up.

8 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: You didn't answer me  
9 when I asked you who do you complain to if you're not  
10 happy with what you see happening.

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So, I--I'm very  
12 happy to pick up the phone and talk to my fellow  
13 commissioners who are responsible for their agencies.  
14 And again, we all work very closely together, and  
15 then can always complain to our boss if we need to--

16 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --if things aren't  
18 going well.

19 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: So, Chair Menchaca,  
20 I think we will do a follow-up conversation maybe in  
21 the fall so that you can bring back to us what  
22 experiences you've had within the implementation of  
23 this transition. At the end of the day we want to be  
24 part of the solution, not part of the problem. Thank  
25 you.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

64

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Chair,  
6 and really I think that continues just back to  
7 unpacking all of this piece and setting goals. We  
8 can't reach any goals unless we set them. We can't--  
9 we can't create relationships unless we--we can see  
10 them. So, I--I not only applaud the Chair--the  
11 Chair's kind of line of--of focus, but we'll be  
12 coming back very shortly. The Budget as it continues  
13 to conclude will actually reveal a lot, which is my  
14 next question, and then I'm going to hand it over to  
15 our next chair. You know, when DACA 2012 was  
16 implementing and announced 16,000 New Yorkers--that  
17 was the number, 16,000 New Yorkers were expected to  
18 need education. Now, in your testimony you've bumped  
19 it up to 24,100. In this moment of change and  
20 increase we're seeing--and there's been a lot of  
21 press on this, Op-ed, et cetera. And in  
22 conversations with advocates, there's been a major  
23 decrease in the literacy component. We're keeping  
24 hold of legal, and we're--we're now seeing the shift  
25 here. How--how can you reconcile the--the increase  
of need in your testimony, and a decrease in dollars  
that we're seeing right now in our budget process?



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

65

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So I can  
address that. MOIA was allocated \$1.3 million in the  
Executive Budget to fund literacy programming to  
potentially DACA eligible populations. This amount  
was part of the funding that was allocated for the  
larger Executive Action Budget for implementation of  
outreach and legal services for Executive Action.  
And the DACA literacy figure was determined based on  
the goal of being strategic and targeted in our  
outreach to potentially eligible DACA individuals,  
and connecting these individuals to our legal  
services and educational support that they need for  
their eligibility. Similar to the anticipated scale  
for Executive Action, we estimate that over the  
course of a year, the city could connect to  
approximately 10% of the potentially DACA eligible  
population for literacy support services. And so  
that's the basis on which the funding was applied.  
So if you--if we say we want to reach 200,000  
individuals through our outreach, we don't expect all  
200,000 people to arrive for a legal screening  
throughout the course of a year. So the percentage  
we've estimated is about 10% will actually come to a  
screening event. And so similarly taking the numbers

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

66

expected for the potentially DACA eligible population  
in New York on new data, we're expecting to actually  
be able to connect about 10% of that population to  
actual services as a result of our targeted outreach  
and screenings.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: To just clarify,  
that's--that's a--that's a legal service screening?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Not educational--

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]

Correct. So the--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --program?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Exactly, but the

ratio--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

You're saying that the screening of--of the--I guess  
the outreach and the intro--introduction to a legal  
service provider is--is going to also being in  
educational--

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]

Correct.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --connections?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Exactly. So the

idea would be to identify--first to do outreach and a

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

67

focused outreach for the hardest to reach  
populations, which are this group of potentially DACA  
eligible, and enable them to be able to get a free  
high quality legal screening. And then, be able to  
connect those individuals who may be DACA eligible  
but for the educational requirement through the  
educational programming that they need--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
Right.

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --but that's  
flexible.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, and--and  
again I hope--I hope staff stay. [sic] I think  
everything here is very different model where the  
efficacy of our connection to our immigrant  
communities does not come with a large kind of  
screening process. And more of an intimate  
conversation with community trusted partners, and as--  
and I hope that we can continue. Going back to that  
sentiment, how does that conversation happen at the--  
at your kind of policy making strategy right now?  
And do you have an alternative outreach program that  
doesn't focus on legal services as the front end, and  
instead is an educational focused only on immigrant

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

68

communities that is not necessarily happening around  
this workforce development?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So to be totally  
clear, the outreach will be through community-based  
providers and others who are in the field who are  
community organizations and others with a view to  
very much building the capacity of those groups. And  
supporting those groups to be able to do even more  
than they've been able to do in the past. And so  
that's the first touchpoint, not the legal screening.  
But if the idea is to provide legal and educational  
services at scale, the community-based providers will  
have the ability to refer an individual to a legal  
screening event to actually get good information  
about what they might be eligible for or not. Which  
as I had mentioned in my testimony is something that  
many of this population may not even identify in that  
way. And so, having that first contact at the  
community level is really critical in helping people  
get access to good legal information, which is really  
the second step. And frankly prevents people going  
to notariats and other providers who might be out  
there. And then at that point it--because we're  
going to be doing very wide scale outreach for those

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

69

5 who may be potentially DACA eligible. Then  
6 connecting them to the education services we think is  
7 the model that will work to reach this hardest to  
8 reach population. Learning frankly from the last  
9 couple of years of who's been able to get DACA and  
10 now who remains who hasn't.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, we're going  
12 to pause here and go over to Chair Mathieu Eugene  
13 from Brooklyn.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,  
15 Mr. Chair. Commissioner, thank you for your  
16 testimony and thank you also to all the members of  
17 the panel. And I'm going quickly because I know that  
18 you have to leave. It is very important to provide  
19 literacy or English classes to the immigrant. This  
20 is wonderful, and I commend you to all of you who are  
21 engaged in doing that. But to one of the things that  
22 we have been observing in the community especially  
23 for those people who don't speak English at home,  
24 what do you have in place to help them be prepared to  
25 learn a different language, a foreign language like  
people coming from Haiti, from Santa de Mayo, [sic]  
Mexico. They are going to learn a new language, you  
know. What is the transition system that make you

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

70

offer them in order for them to be ready and to get  
the full advantage of learning the new language?

STACIE EVANS: So that's where the city's  
broad adult education comes in. There are programs  
in every borough all across the city that offer  
English language classes that offer basic education  
and HSE programming. So that people can start at the  
most beginning level and work their way up through  
those programs.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So, what I'm  
thinking about is there any transition, you know,  
bilingual? You know, both--like somebody who speaks  
Creole. At the same time, you know, he's getting the  
transition in his language before he starts, you  
know, learning English, or somebody from the Spanish  
community?

STACIE EVANS: I know that there are some  
programs that offer programming in native language.  
I would have to look into that to get those numbers  
for you and get back to you on that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well, thank you very  
much. Do you believe that--because there are so many  
people in New York City who came from a different  
country. Do you think that you have been serving the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

71

number of people who are in need of literacy? Have  
you been able to serve all of them, and do you  
believe that we're seeing a large population of  
people who didn't have the opportunity to benefit  
from the literacy that you are offering?

STACIE EVANS: There's--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [interposing] Like  
what is the percentage, you know?

STACIE EVANS: There's still a very large  
number of people. So, as I said in my testimony, 1.7  
million people need the services that--that we are  
offering. And at this moment the city is able to  
serve both your city funding, and through other  
sources the city serves about 80,000 people. So it's  
a huge difference between those two, and that's why  
we continue to work to develop new programs. We want  
to partner with the Council to make sure that we can  
fund as many new seats and new classes as we possibly  
can.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I know that, you  
know, it has not been easy to provide literacy to  
those immigrant people who need the service. What,  
if you can tell me, what is the biggest challenge  
that you face in terms of providing literacy to the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

72

immigrant people? What is the biggest challenge?

And how are you planning to overcome this challenge?

STACIE EVANS: So our role in first development is really a coordination and policy making role, and so we are really partnering with city agencies, community providers to really talk to folks and understand so what are the things we need to be moving forward on? How do we need to be making changes, and how can we as the Mayor's Office coordinate that work so that funds are spent most effectively, more people are served and that we see as many positive outcomes as we can.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But what I want to know, you know, is basically your experience. You know, the everyday experience. You are serving people. You are providing money to our city. But if there is one thing, is it funding? Is it, you know, the ability to communicate with the people, with our students? What is the biggest challenge that you face in terms of providing, you know, literacy to people who don't speak English? What is the biggest challenge you face in terms of providing, you know, literacy to people who don't speak English? What is



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

73

the biggest challenge? What is it exactly? Is that  
funding--

STACIE EVANS: [interposing] So--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --education or--?

STACIE EVANS: You're--you're offering me  
the easiest answer of funding. I won't lie.

[laughs] It really is a big issue always for  
programming like this, but our office doesn't provide  
direct services. We really are working with agencies  
and programs to coordinate with them to make sure  
that things are covered across the systems. But I'm  
sure if you asked providers in the room if funding is  
a big issue for them, they will probably all say yes.  
There needs to be a lot more funding in adult  
education. Uh--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. I'm sorry.

Go ahead.

STACIE EVANS: But yes, for us the issue  
is about coordinating what exists now and how do we  
make it work as effectively as possible.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,  
but my last question to you: What has been done to  
overcome this challenge? And can we, you know, bring  
more funding today?

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

74

5 STACIE EVANS: So I know that  
6 conversations are happening right now with the  
7 budget. So I don't have answers to--to that, but  
8 once that's finalized, we'll see where we are.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much,  
10 and thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Chair  
12 Eugene. We've also--we're joined by Council Member  
13 Cumbo, Council Member Cabrera and Council Member  
14 Gibson, and then we're headed over to Council Member  
15 Barron from Bronx--from Brooklyn.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chair. Thank you to the panel for coming to share  
18 your testimony. We know that in--I want to also  
19 acknowledge my committee members who joined us,  
20 Vacca, Rodriguez, Cabrera, Williams, Cumbo, Gibson.  
21 So we are at 100%. Just want that on the record. In  
22 terms of the allocations, I believe that in 2013 for  
23 Fiscal Year 2014 and '15, there was \$18 million that  
24 was allocated, and some of that went to CBOs. Some  
25 of that went to CUNY, and the target was to assist--  
to provide assistance to those who might be eligible,  
and to provide the educational opportunities for  
those who needed to get that further assistance. Do

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

75

5 we have a number that we can identify as those who  
6 have benefitted from the program?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: That's a great  
8 question. So the City Council had made funding of \$9  
9 million available over two years--

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Right.

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --in 2013 to 2015  
12 for a combination of outreach, educational and legal.  
13 And approximately 7,000 individuals were assisted  
14 over the course of two years with that funding.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, and do we know  
16 how many actually had their applications completed  
17 and do we know the outcome of that process?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: I'm not sure if we  
19 know the actual application outcomes, but we can  
20 follow up to see if that information, that program  
21 was administered by DYCD. We can get specific  
22 numbers, but I don't know that we have them.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I would be  
24 interested in knowing because at one point in my  
25 career in working with the Board of Education, I did  
teach adult literacy and then I coordinated the  
program for the GED. And it's really a great  
challenge. Most of these persons who are

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

76

participating are working. They have families. They have lots of other obligations. So they don't really have perhaps a dedicated schedule that they can commit on a regular basis, but it's as they can fit it in. And I know it's a really tough challenge to be able to get the consistency in participating in these programs to be able to get the full benefit. And often times when they're not able to be successful on that first round, they get discouraged, and you really need to be able to support them. So I know that this is a very important program, and I know that it's something that the Council supports, and the Administration as well. Do have an idea as to the age range of those who most benefit from participating in this program?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So I don't know the age range of the individuals sort of for this specific program over the last two years, but I do-- what we do know is that about half who applied initially were under the age--I should revisit my testimony--but were under the age of 21. So it tended to be a younger population based on some of the research that's just come out about DACA. Some of the older individuals who may be eligible, tended to

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

77

2 apply with less frequency. DACA itself is eligible  
3 for really 18 to 31, and so--

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] 18 to-  
5 -?

6 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thirty-one.

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Why is that  
8 age cap?

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Well, the new  
10 announcement by the President eliminated the age cap,  
11 but sadly--

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --we're not  
14 allowed to move forward with that program yet because  
15 it's tied up in the courts.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Now, that--that age  
17 group has also another criteria and that is by the  
18 year 20 something. What is that?

19 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Right. So the  
20 eligibility--

21 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] 2013?

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --requirements for  
23 DACA as it currently stands where you have to have  
24 come to the U.S. before your 16th birthday. That you  
25 were under the age of 31 on June 15th, 2012, and that

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

78

you've lived continuously in the U.S. since 2007, and  
there's few other requirements, but those are the key  
ones from right now.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Thank you.  
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank  
you, Chair for--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Oh, I  
have one other question.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Go ahead, go  
ahead.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What do you find to  
be--which languages do you find to be the ones that  
are most required or most requested for those who are  
participating in the programs?

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So Spanish  
is by far the kind of most frequent language as well--  
followed by--closely by Mandarin Chinese.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. So, clearly  
I think there's a couple things that I just want to  
reiterate. One is since the beginning of the--of the  
formation of this hearing we had invited DYCD and  
they're not here. And I think you've--you've

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

79

expressed your disappointment that they're not here.

Two, we know that there's a lot of communication and  
coordination happening, and so, we applaud that.

There's a lot of transition happening not just here  
in the city as the new Administration and new City  
Council and new funding priorities. But as we react  
to the federal, the lack of federal, and also just  
the hurdles that the federal government and the  
courts are giving us, that the essential piece to all  
of this is that coordination piece. So, next time  
when we have a Council hearing, we're going to need  
all the agencies to kind of show us exactly the--the  
lines and how they connect. And I know, you--we're  
leaving now. We're going to--we're going to end this  
panel, but I hope staff can really take note about  
some of the questions that you're providing and so  
that we can continue to learn from them specifically.  
And that might even affect some changes that we can  
make now as we--as we wrap up the funding--the  
funding process. So thank you so much for your work.

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we'll continue  
to--we'll continue this conversation. This is the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

80

beginning of the big ride. We have to get this  
right. We have to get this right. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Our next panel, if  
you can get ready and come up to the--to the able.  
Roberto Gurena [sp?] from the NYCCT CUNY Program;  
Robert Smith, Baruch College; Adriana Blancarte-  
Hayward, Outreach Manager at Immigrant Affairs;  
Arianna Rosas, the New York Immigration Coalition.  
If you can all make it up. Thank you so much for  
being here today, and you can be--begin on--to my  
left. Make sure it's on, the red light is on.

ROBERT SMITH: Here we go. So good  
morning and thank you very much for the opportunity  
to testify. I especially thank the Chairs Menchaca,  
Arroyo and Eugene. My name is Robert Smith. I'm a  
professor at the City University of New York at  
Baruch College, and also the Lead and the Research  
Director on the Mexican Initiative under Deferred  
Action, which is a collaborative project promoting  
deferred action. Among a variety of partners, the  
Mexican Consulate, the New York Immigration  
Coalition, Make the Road New York, MASA and ten other  
CBOs that serve the Mexican community. The reasons



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

81

for which I'll discuss in a minute. This analysis is  
my own statement. It does not necessarily imply  
endorsement by any of the partners. The first thing  
that I would say is that DACA--promoting DACA by  
promoting adult education is the single most  
important thing that the City Council can do to  
increase the life chances of these New Yorkers.

I would also reiterate what we heard in  
the earlier testimony that the numbers have dropped  
nationwide for DACA applications because we're  
hitting the hard cases now. The people that need  
adult education. And I think that's a very important  
thing for us to underline. The third thing I'll say  
is that the Mexican community in New York overall  
demographers estimate that 23% of DACA eligibles  
needed adult education to qualify. That was 16,000  
out of 70,000 people in the city. But the Mexican  
population was 43% of DACA eligibles by time needed  
adult education. Nearly 7,000 out of over 15,000  
people. I've done independent research through this  
initiative that where the surveys completely back up  
the demog--demographic estimates where 42% of the  
Mexicans that we surveyed needed adult education to  
be able to apply. And we see this scene repeated

again and again where people come in, we do a screening, they have the time.

We try to get them place in an adult ed class, and there's no possibility. Only 18% of the people outreached in the first round in 2014 actually ended up apply for DACA. And one of the single biggest reasons they did not follow through is that they could not get access to adult education. So I think it's critically--critically important that we fund adult education well. And secondly, we need a system to allocate those spots. Because we have a massive collection--collective action problem, right? Where there are lots of different people trying to place people and there's no place to do it. I can also tell you that from my work with this initiative and all these service providers that they have learned a tremendous amount about how to better do this advocacy, and to convert DACA contact into actual DACA applications. It's not going to happen I don't think by--by doing sort of the regular kind of outreach. I think it's going to happen by having services that help people through the process.

Because it's not just one encounter, and then they come back with their application. It's a

1 variety of encounters. We have developed a model  
2 where we will promote at least a thousand  
3 applications over the coming year. But it was  
4 premised on the availability of adult education, and  
5 if that's not available, it's going to make things  
6 very difficult. Another thing that I would like to  
7 add is that, and I'm drawing on my own research and  
8 on the research of many others here. Long-term  
9 undocumented status really does bad things to and for  
10 families, and kids and for New York City. One of the  
11 things it does is it breaks the link between  
12 educational hard work and future outcomes. If you  
13 know you're going to be an undocumented kid after you  
14 graduate from high school and after you graduate from  
15 college, why bother if you're going to still work in  
16 a pizzeria. In a book I'm writing I call this the  
17 Hooky Party Moratorium.  
18

19           Meaning, you know, some of the kids in  
20 high school actually think they're being incentivized  
21 to like why would you go keep studying when you're  
22 still going to work in the same place? You don't  
23 gain any benefit. For kids that have gotten DACA,  
24 that equation has been changed. The kids that get  
25 DACA principals have told us they're working harder.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

84

I think this is critically important. The other  
thing I would say is these people--these CBOs that  
have been doing this kind of outreach have links with  
the people in their communities, and have developed  
models for doing this. We have lists of thousands of  
people that have been outreached that we're following  
up with little by little. If we can't place them  
into adult education, we can't help them. If we can  
place them in adult education, then we can. I was  
told this is three minutes. Somebody may have  
forgotten to turn the clock on. So I will thank that  
person for that oversight --[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

Thank you.

ROBERT SMITH. --and thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much.

ROBERTO GARENA : Good afternoon and  
thank you Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugene, Barron and  
members of the City Council for the opportunity to  
testify today. I am reading the testimony of Dr.  
Leslie Oppenheim, the City University Director of  
Language and Literacy Programs who is out of the  
country. I am Roberto Herrera [sp?], Director of the  
Adult Literacy DACA and CUNY Language Immersion

Program at the New York City College of Technology of  
CUNY. The City University of New York, CUNY,  
provides many opportunities for immigrants to learn  
English, whether for academic purposes for work or to  
achieve basic literacy for greater participation in  
the city they now call home. One of these  
opportunities is the CUNY Adult Literacy High School  
Equivalency ESL Program, which is offered on 14  
campuses of the University including my own in  
Brooklyn, in all boroughs of the city. For more than  
30 years, this program has provided the critical  
pathway for immigrant adults and out of school youth  
to access the further education they need to enter  
the workforce or move up to more secure employment.

These students are New York City  
residents who have emigrated to New York City from  
all over the world speaking more than 100 different  
languages and who are parents, caregivers and leaders  
in their communities. They are also regular people  
leading the heroic and often difficult lives of  
immigrants who don't speak English for whom the  
culture is a puzzle, for whom employment  
opportunities are restricted, and for whom long  
waiting lists for an ESL class exists all over the

city. Anyone who has ever learned a second language as an adult knows just how hard it is, and how long it takes. It is a long slide through the verb forms, learning the different kinds of language you need to speak to a boss to speak to a child's teacher, and what to say to the pharmacist or the doctor when you have a question. CUNY as well as other agencies provides an important lifeline for the adult English Language learners through their ESL and High School Equivalency programs.

These programs, free to students, are always funded on a shoe string with the necessity of turning away thousands of applicants from already overcrowded classrooms. Such New York City residents are asking only for the opportunity to improve their English language proficiency or earn a High School Equivalency diploma. The immigrants of this city depend on public funding to make their education possible. At the City University of New York, with the loss of City Council DACA funding, more than 2,500 students who previously had a seat in one of our DACA programs as of June 30, will no longer have one. For DACA students what this means is an education interrupted once again. Just as learners

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

87

are beginning to feel confident in their use of the  
language and their capacity to advocate for  
themselves or their ability to answer questions on  
the High School Equivalency exam. High School  
Equivalency exam [bell] their chances to continue  
their studies will be taken from them.

New York City leadership must provider  
greater educational opportunities to enable these  
adult immigrants to get a foothold into the labor  
force and move up economically, and impact the  
education and wellbeing of their children. And New  
York City needs the skills, perspectives and  
international understandings that adult immigrants  
bring with them in order to realize our full  
potential as a city. Steady adequate funding to  
address the needs of close to two million immigrants  
who speak less than adequate English is required. It  
is an investment in the future of this city that is  
worth making. Over the years, the New York City  
Council has been an important partner in the  
provision of adult literacy, High School Equivalency  
and the ESL classes--services. I am joining with  
others here today to urge you to reinstate CUNY's  
DACA funding for education services and to commit

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

88

added resources to the overall for adult literacy in  
the city. We are asking you to build upon your  
involvement and upon your commitment to address the  
educational needs of the city's immigrant communities  
keeping in mind the struggles of your parents and  
grandparents, generations of newcomers to New York.  
We are asking for your help. We can't do this work  
without this increased support, and this generation  
of immigrants and their children, the next generation  
depend on it. Thank you for this opportunity to  
bring this message to you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. So the  
clock is back on. Let's try to stay with the--within  
the three minutes. We have five panels of  
conversation to listen to and witnesses. Thank you.

ADRIANA BLANCATE-HAYWARD: Good  
afternoon. My name is Adriana Blancarte-Hayward, and  
I am the Outreach Manager for Immigrant Affairs for  
the New York Public Library. Thank you to the Chairs  
Carlos Menchaca, Maria Del Carmen Arroyo, Mathieu  
Eugene and Inez Barron as well as all the members of  
this committee and the City Council. Thank you for  
the opportunity to join you today and speak about  
what New Yorkers for Libraries is doing to help adult



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

89

5 immigrants succeed. We are the nation's largest  
6 public library system with a unique combination of 88  
7 neighborhood branches and four scholar research  
8 centers serving all New Yorkers throughout locations  
9 in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.

10 We are a city of immigrants. 37% of us,  
11 3.1 million people were born in another country. 49%  
12 of all New Yorkers speaking a language other than  
13 English at home. To serve our diverse population,  
14 NYPL offers multiple services in many languages  
15 across the city. We work hard to make sure all  
16 immigrants are comfortable and safe in public  
17 libraries and we are proud to help meet their  
18 educational needs. Today, I will briefly talk about  
19 our five main initiatives to educate our adult  
20 immigrant community. First, are the English Literacy  
21 classes, which for more than 100 years NYPL had  
22 provided immigrants the opportunity to learn how to  
23 read and write in English. I brought to signs here  
24 just to show you from Early 20th Century from our  
25 COMPASS Programs that show advertised English and  
citizenship classes both in Polish and Italian.  
People come to the library to learn so they can

advance their careers, connect with their  
communities.

That was my personal case ten years ago  
when I came to the U.S., and to help the children  
succeed. In the past three years we have increased  
our English for speakers of other languages by 400%.  
We have classes in 34 branches, slightly more than  
10,000 student seats. 80% of our students they don't  
have any other place to go to learn English. We are  
one of the city's biggest providers after the  
Department of Education and CUNY. The library is  
open for an increase city funding so that we can  
continue expanding our formal literacy and language  
instruction as well as less structured drop-in  
programs such as the WANY developed by the Mayor's  
Office and CUNY. For technology training, since  
2012, we have expanded our technical program. We  
have it in 80 locations over 80 courses in many  
languages, Spanish and East Bengali. Materials are  
available for staff learning on the website in  
English, Spanish and in Russian and French.

We also launched in the spring a  
financial literacy program where we teach immigrants  
basic savings, budgeting, housing. And they have the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

91

opportunity to meet one-on-one with coaches. This  
program is presented in Spanish, Mandarin and  
Cantonese in 11 of our neighborhood branches. For  
small businesses, as we know nearly half of the  
city's 220,000 small business owners are immigrants.  
So we are partnering with New York City's Small  
Business Services providing free business courses at  
selected locations in multiple languages to assist  
them in applying for these funds. And finally, in  
partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant  
Affairs and United States Citizenship and Immigration  
Services we have established new American corners at  
every library where we provide information and  
materials on citizenship and immigration as well as  
citizenship classes at some locations. I just want  
to say that through our diverse programs and  
services, NYPL is helping new immigrants find their  
way in New York City. As you make the final  
decisions about what to fund in this year's budget,  
please support libraries and the essential services  
that they are providing to the city's diverse and  
economic immigrant community. And thank you very  
much for this opportunity to testify today.

ARIANA ROSAS: Good afternoon. My name is Ariana Rosas and I'm Special Projects Associate at the New York Immigration Coalition. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The City of New York has always been defined and structured by its immigrant population. Immigrants account for nearly half of our city's workforce, but a significant portion of this population are low-wage earners who fall victim to exploitive labor practices due to low literacy rates, lack of English language ability and poor job skills. Without an adequate investment in adult literacy programs that offer these New Yorkers the literacy and numeracy skills that are required to better perform on their jobs, receive training and advance their career, the city is allowing our working poor communities to remain on the margins of society. English language skills also facilitate the way families communicate with their children's teachers, interact with medical professionals and law enforcement and otherwise make way for deeper levels of civic participation and engagement. Yet, in New York City today over 1.7 million New Yorkers over the age of 18 lack English proficiency, a high school diploma or both. We are

not doing enough for these New Yorkers. The citywide deficit in accessible community-based adult literacy services became readily apparent following President Obama's 2012 DACA announcement. A key challenge for DACA enrollment citywide was that many immigrants didn't know their enrollment--didn't know that enrollment in municipally funded adult literacy program could meet the education requirement. However, following years of cuts to adult literacy programming, there was not sufficient capacity to serve those New Yorkers who needed to enroll in an adult literacy program. To address this need, the New York City Council in 2013 created a groundbreaking and nationally recognized initiative by investing \$18 million into DACA related outreach, legal and literacy services administered by DYCD and CUNY. The program's design was intentional in using adult literacy as an outreach vehicle as well as a safe classroom space where students could self-identify as potential---potentially DACA eligible and seek out the services of a legal provider in a coordinated network. Such a model is critical when serving this population of older age DACA eligible who are more likely to be parents, live in

overcrowded housing, live in absolute poverty, and to have never attended school who are readily--who are already in the workforce. Sorry. And need better incentives to reveal their status in order to become DACA eligible. Over the last two years this initiative has served over 10,000 New Yorkers. However, despite this success, the current Fiscal Year 2016 Budget includes a cut of \$4.75 million and shifts the program administration to HRA and MOIA. Such a cut will result in approximately 4,100 students losing access to their English Language and High School Equivalency--Equivalency courses. Such a cut also comes at an acutely--acutely inopportune time with President Obama's November Executive Action set to take effect once the court injunction is lifted. The planned loss of literacy seats will be devastating to thousands of hard working New Yorkers and their families particularly DACA eligible young adults and DAPA eligible parents who may need incentives to apply such as access to adult literacy class [bell]. And that would offer the skills to earn a better job and encourage participating in DAPA in order to enter the formal workforce. In closing, basic literacy skills translate into direct personal

economic growth, and deeper economic revenues for the city. Families with literacy skills tend to be more well informed, feel empowered and become more active participants in the community and local economy. But this requires the City Council's committed investment in the future of its residents. If the City and the Administration are serious about bringing 800,000 out of poverty, this is where it starts.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. We have a series of questions. I'm going to do two and hand it over to the rest of the chairs, and then I'll come back for a second round. My first question, actually I'll just start here with Ms. Rosas. On the budget cuts we've been very visible and vocal on this issue in the last few weeks. And on the cuts particularly that are affecting, or expressed in your testimony, how did you-- In--in just the conversation with the Administration, we heard--we heard earlier how--how--how do you--how are you reconciling what we hear today from the Administration on the different focus areas? And essentially members of our community accessing the services just in a different way? How--how do you feel about that--that response?

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

96

5 [pause]

6 ARIANA ROSAS: Thank you. Well, I think  
7 it's important to continue to provide adult literacy  
8 classes, and I think a safe space where people could  
9 self-identify as opposed to--you know, many of us who  
10 are working for community-based organizations aren't  
11 lawyers aren't really keeping or allowed to sort of  
12 moving forward with that process if someone is self-  
13 identifying. But I do think it's important to  
14 continue to provide a service that not only--that is  
15 open to the community who is wanting to learn a  
16 different language. Not just specific to DACA--to  
17 the DACA eligible population, but that is an  
18 important component of that.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, are you  
20 referring directly to the kind of legal--legal  
21 services model--

22 ARIANA ROSAS: [interposing] Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --that--that--so  
24 just to kind of--tell--tell me more about your  
25 reactions to the kind of legal services front end  
26 outreach plan, and get closer to the mic, if you can.

27 ARIANA ROSAS: Oh, sorry.

28 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

97

ARIANA ROSAS: Um, sorry. Is this--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

This is going to be a question we're going to ask  
over and over again so prepare.

ARIANA ROSAS: [laughs] Really. Again,  
I mean I feel like it's important to maintain not  
anonymity, but the confidence of the community in  
being able to again provide a service not only for  
young adults, but the older adult population. And I  
think by focusing on legal we're really sort of  
leaving a large population of people who could be  
potentially--who could benefit but also potentially--  
I'm sorry. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Go ahead.

ARIANA ROSAS: But yeah, sorry, I--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and I--I  
guess what I want to say is that I think we agree. I  
think--I think we agree in a big way, and we're going  
to be hearing that confirmed over and over again. So  
that's an important piece to--to underline. And for  
CUNY I want to ask was the Administration--has the  
Administration reached out as thought partner in this  
kind of evolution as they start shifting the--the  
kind of focus areas. And for example the Mexican

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

98

information or the information about the Mexican  
population being a high population with no education  
and the requirement for our educational pieces. Have  
you been in conversations with the Administration in  
helping develop their strategy?

ROBERT SMITH: No.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Keep going.

ROBERT SMITH: We did meet and say we  
should get together and talk.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, absolutely,  
which we're going to--we're going to recommend  
strongly.

ROBERT SMITH: And I'm very happy to  
contribute in any way that I can.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And you already  
have with this testimony. This is incredible work,  
and thank you. Council Member Arroyo.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Mr.  
Chair. Just to be clear, this is not a budget  
hearing, right, but it seems to be kind of the  
conversation. CUNY is asking for money and the  
Public Libraries are asking for money, and the non-  
profit organization are asking for money. And the  
concern that I--I have in the discussion that we're

1 having today. As you heard my questions to the  
2 Administration the translation of the services from  
3 one agency to the other, and how do we ensure that  
4 those--that that transition is executed successfully.  
5 And what I found interesting is that CUNY was not  
6 part of that conversation given the programs and--and  
7 the wealth of services that CUNY provides. So my,  
8 you know, my questions is well, where are you in this  
9 conversation? And were you engaged in any discussion  
10 with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs or  
11 Workforce Development around HRA or DYCD? And the  
12 answer is no. No--no engagement whatsoever. Yes?

14 ROBERT SMITH: Not with me. No, I--I  
15 haven't. I don't want to speak for all of CUNY, but  
16 for the project that I'm working on, no.

17 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I'm sorry, but if I  
18 see someone providing me testimony a letterhead of an  
19 organization or an entity, I'm assuming that you're  
20 representing that entity. So, you're asking CUNY and  
21 the Library system is asking--you're asking for  
22 funding. Well, where does your--the--your entity's  
23 funding get divided, and how much of that is your  
24 system putting into immigrant services adult  
25 literacy. Notwithstanding what the Council can do

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

100

and fund, what's your entity's commitment to lifting  
this service delivery system?

ROBERTO HERRERAS: I'm here to speak on  
behalf of Dr. Leslee Oppenheim, but I can speak on my  
behalf in terms of what I know locally at my program  
at City Tech. We have a range of services for  
students who are DACA eligible that includes programs  
that are funded through other sources including  
private sources. We also refer--we provide the  
outreach recruitment and the education piece for DACA  
students and then we also refer the students with the  
legal piece to CUNY Citizenship Now. So, I think  
that there are many opportunities for students who  
enter the program through DACA or in any other way to  
attain other kinds of services. I also manage a CUNY  
Language Immersion program, which is funding through  
tax levy. And that is for students who are  
interested in going to college, and we do provide  
counseling and support to help students access pretty  
much everything that's available to them within CUNY.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. So since  
you're here, I guess you can take a message back to  
the folks at CUNY since, you know, you have their  
letterhead on your testimony, right. What--what are-

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

101

-in--in the Administration's testimony, I only heard  
La Guardia referenced. I'm sure that every other  
CUNY institution has some level of adult literacy  
services. What is the CUNY portfolio at the  
different institutions so we can--and--and what is  
the funding necessary to maintain that portfolio  
whether through private dollars or the CUNY  
administration making a commitment to designate some  
of that funding directly what the Council can do in  
collaboration with the Administration. Because if we  
don't--if we don't understand the universe of what's  
available, we're not going to understand what gap  
exists. We're hearing there's a gap, but how deep is  
that gap, and how much is required to bridge it to  
bring a level of service that's going to address the  
number of individuals that we would need to serve.  
If they all came forward today, I have a sense that  
we're in trouble. We're not going to be able to  
respond to the need that that's going to create. So  
I don't beat up the messenger, but I think it's  
important that we get our hands around the depth of  
the need. So that we can eliminate that barrier of  
the lack of access to adult education--to education  
for individuals that could be eligible. And thank

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

102

you for your testimony, and for the work that you do.

I love CUNY just so that you don't get it twisted.

I'm--I'm a CUNY fan. [laughs] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ROBERT SMITH: And I would like to  
respond to one other thing. The--the one--the theme  
I keep hearing is that there's going to be a  
transition, and that the services will be offered in  
a new way. The build it and they will come theory is  
not going to work. If you just have more legal  
service or more, you know, if even there was more  
adult ed, if you do not have the bridges for people  
to cross to get that. And if you do not have the  
knowledge of the community to be able to help those  
people not only find out about that, but usher them  
through the DACA process. Gathering your--if you've  
been hiding your life for the last years, how do you  
gather the documents to demonstrate that that life  
exists. It's going to be a labor intensive process,  
and the social--there's mountains of social science  
research that how that one-on-one counseling is going  
to be one of the--a very effective piece of this. So  
I just wanted to respond to the general question  
that--that at least two of the chairs have put. But  
I think build it and they will come is theory, but

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

103

action that are not going to work on this project.

We--we need the knowledge that these community  
organizations have.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Chair Barron.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Mr.

Chair. Thank the panel for coming to provide  
testimony. My questions are for Mr. Garena. Did I  
pronounce that correctly? Yes. You said that--we  
know that CUNY has programs on 14 campuses. So,  
which of the campuses that don't have programs? Are  
all of the senior colleges and junior colleges  
included in that? And if not, which ones are not?

ROBERTO GARENA : I don't have the  
information in front of me, but I could get that.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay,  
if you could ask CUNY to give me a listing so that I  
could identify where there might be some that do not  
have the program. I'd be interested to know which  
ones might not be on the list and how we can  
accommodate them. Do you know which campuses has the  
greatest number of students who are taking or making  
themselves available of the programs that you're  
offering in terms of the programs here that we're  
talking about?

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

104

5 ROBERTO GARENA : No, I can only talk  
6 about mine. We have about 250 per year.

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: 250 at City Tech.

8 ROBERTO GARENA : Yeah, at City Tech.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And are these  
10 programs--do they have a specific course curriculum  
11 over 10 weeks, 20 weeks, the semester, the year? Are  
12 they designated with a specific timeline or is it  
13 based on the need of the students and when they feel  
14 that they're eligible to take a course or a class  
15 rather or test? Do they then do that?

16 ROBERTO GUERENA: There are different  
17 schedules on different offerings and, of course, it's  
18 always dependent on the student's ability to--to take  
19 the classes and whatever schedule is best for them.  
20 We offer classes day time, evening and Saturdays as  
21 well.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: At your particular  
23 location are all students accommodated, or do you  
24 know if there's wait list?

25 ROBERTO GUERENA: There's always a wait  
list.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: There's always a  
wait list. Okay. And so for those that are on the



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

105

wait list, do you know how long they have to wait  
before they get serviced?

ROBERTO GUERENA: It varies but for ESL  
it could be a year or more in some cases.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: It's a year?

ROBERTO GUERENA: Or more. This has  
always been true. I--I've been in the field for  
about 35 years, and when I used to work at La Guardia  
the waiting list was even longer. So, it was as much  
as three years. So, it's--it's absurd. We try to  
refer students to other programs, but they're equally  
challenged in terms of how many students they can  
serve.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Do you have any data  
on those students that pass the test would then move  
on and enroll in one of the CUNY institutions?

ROBERTO GUERENA: Which test?

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: The language test,  
the High School Equivalency. Once they complete the  
preparation for High School Equivalency exam and pass  
that and get their GED or HSE, do we have any data on  
how many of those students who are graduates of the  
program who now have that basic high school degree  
move on and become students at a CUNY institution?

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

106

5 ROBERTO GUERENA: I can provide you with  
6 information, but that is information we do collect  
7 and we have in a database.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Great. If you could  
9 share that with our committee, we would appreciate  
10 that as well. And the question in terms of the CUNY  
11 Citizenship Now program that CUNY has operated for so  
12 many years, I understand that's no longer going to be  
13 operated by CUNY.

14 ROBERTO GUERENA: I'm not aware of that.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. I think that  
16 there might be another organization that's going to  
17 be partnering with CUNY, but we'll look into that and  
18 we'll see how that is structured. And I would like  
19 to know what would be the relationship between CUNY  
20 if, in fact, another agency is going to take that  
21 over? And finally, what is your relationship beyond  
22 the campus sites that you have, what is your  
23 relationship with other organization that provide  
24 these services. Do you offer any support to them?  
25 Do you offer professional development to other  
programs that are related to this in any way?

ROBERTO GUERENA: We work with different  
agencies including the library. We work with the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

107

Mexican Consulate who also provides us with students.  
We have affiliations with lots of CBOs and other CUNY  
campuses, the whole range of programs throughout the  
city.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And finally, as you  
talked about private funds that are supporting some  
of these programs, are they designated to any  
particular programs? And how does that work? Is the  
money dispersed through the 14 campuses or is it  
targeted to a particular--

ROBERTO GUERENA: [interposing] Just at  
City Tech. We--we have a unique program. It's  
called a hospitality program. It's a partnership  
with the Mexican Consulate in the town of Puebla and  
Goya Foods. So that's the private partner.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

ROBERTO GUERENA: And also CUNY provides  
some funding, and it's basically for students who are  
looking to get into the hospitality industry. Many  
of them work in restaurants. All of them are Mexican  
Nationals.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very much.

ROBERTO GUERENA: You're welcome.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

108

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much  
8 to this panel. We're going onto head to the next  
9 panel, and there's a follow up here that you've kind  
10 of given us for development in our next hearing that  
11 we'll hopefully come back in the fall for. So next  
12 for the panel Freddy Acevedo, Adult Literacy Turning  
13 Point; Lawrence Fish, Shorefront Y; Miriam, Arab-  
14 American Family Support Center; and Irfan Ahmed,  
15 Arab-American Family Support Center as well. And you  
16 can--we can have you sit over here, please.

17 [background comments, pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I'll read off  
19 the names for the next panel. So you can get ready.  
20 Louis Welz, COJO of Flatbush; Kevin Douglas, United  
21 Neighborhood; Nelson Yu, Community--Queens Community  
22 House and the Leah Herbert--Herrera. That's for the  
23 next--that's for the next panel. So just--you're--  
24 you're on--you're on deck for the next panel. Okay,  
25 and we can begin here on the left.

[pause]

26 LAWRENCE FISH: Can you hear me? Hi.  
27 Thank you. I want to just read what I had written

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

109

yesterday and I had a few more comments that  
developed while I was listening. Hello, and thank  
you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is  
Lawrence Fish. I'm the Director of Adult Education,  
Vocation and Citizenship Services at the Shorefront  
YM-YWHA at Brighton Manhattan-Beach in Brooklyn, and  
I'm testifying on behalf of our adult literacy  
programs. At the Shorefront Y we have a large adult  
education program in Brooklyn. We provide classes  
and related services to over 1,000 unduplicated  
adults yearly with limited English proficiency  
through programs including ESL, ESOL, ABE, Adult  
Basic Ed, English language, civics. We are funded  
for these programs by DYCD, by the New York State  
Education Department through the Federal Workforce  
Investment Opportunity Initiative, WIOI--WIOI  
dollars. And we also receive Department of Homeland  
Security OCIS funding for citizenship classes and  
services. Our literacy programs run at full  
capacity. We have a long ongoing waiting list for  
classes of at least 400 students seeking literacy  
program services at any given time. Without regular  
outreach. Outreach would be--if we did formal  
outreach we'd have a lot more I'm sure. There is

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

110

clearly a tremendous need for literacy services in  
our area and throughout New York City. The loss to  
New York City through cuts in the Executive Budget  
for adult education is immediately damaging and a  
long-term disaster for our communities. Whereas,  
already stated more than one in five adults over the  
age of 18 in New York, 1.7 million have limited  
English proficiency or a lack of high school  
education or equivalency or both. Especially hard  
hit by these cuts specifically is the 2 point--  
specifically the \$2.8 cut in funding to DYCD, and the  
elimination of the DYCD Young Immigrant Literacy  
Program, which informally was known as DACA and is a  
DACA program for DACA, potential DACA applicants  
administered by DCYD. And a transferring  
continuation of only a small portion of these  
fundings level to HRA. The results--the results and  
the burden of the cuts hitting the population most at  
risk and in need in our city, young undocumented  
adults or young adults residing in New York City  
illegally who benefit from these well spent literacy  
dollars will have to remain in the shadows. Will be  
less likely to complete a high school education or  
obtain an HSE. Will be less likely to attend post-

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

111

5 secondary training and education. Will be less able  
6 to effectively negotiate health systems and practice  
7 preventive health or make healthy life choices. Will  
8 be less able to [bell] earn a living wage. Less able  
9 to find meaningful regular employment and develop  
10 careers.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Mr. Fish, I know  
12 we have it written as well.

13 LAWRENCE FISH: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can you just wrap  
15 up with any kind of final thoughts maybe? Some  
16 critical ones especially some--

17 LAWRENCE FISH: Well, I have--I would  
18 bring a few cases, a few personal stories from two.  
19 Can we just spend a few paragraphs on this?

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

21 LAWRENCE FISH: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Just focus on one  
23 kind of sailing point.

24 LAWRENCE FISH: It catches the range of  
25 people that we're talking about. I want to tell you  
about today is an auspicious day for one of our DACA  
young immigrant students including for our DACA class  
student, Anastasia Tomaliovich [sp?]. She was hoping

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

112

to give testimony, but was unable to attend. She was  
starting community college at Kingsborough. She  
attended DACA classes this year in the morning as her  
children were in UPK and her husband worked  
construction. She and her family will have a better  
future and so will our community. I want to tell you  
about another student. This is on page 2, I guess,  
Eliana, whose last name--she doesn't know that I'm  
testifying about her. Who was one of those who came  
out of the shadows and obtained DACA status with the  
help of our--us and the Brooklyn Defender Services,  
BDS, as part of the DACA funding. Eliana is an  
immigrant who at least speaks English.  
Unfortunately, she struggles and miserable in school,  
dropped out of high school. We see that she writes  
poorly and terrible at math. She's hoping to get an  
HSE some day, but for the year she attended our ABE  
classes and additional volunteer tutoring in basic  
math and she says she gets up everyday and works on  
her math before going to work. She spent a year  
learning the times tables and getting better at  
working with addition, subtraction and negative and  
positive numbers. Watching how hard she tries, how  
diligent and how persistent she is despite her slow



progress and frustration. I suspect she has an undiagnosed brain disability and realize may never achieve an HSE. Also, as I'm led to understand, it will be a very expensive diagnosing any specific disability or that there are very limited services for this kind of situation. However, she has obtained a job at an ethnic bakery. She makes donuts and related baked goods. In the fall she was suspended and almost lost her job. She burned trays of product and miscalculated ingredients. Now, that no longer happens. She is studying. She is working. She has legal employment status, although be it insecure. I want to tell you that there is range of the 127 people that we enrolled in this DACA program. There is that full range. People who are now starting. Three of them today actually I think at community college or this week, and those who may never apply for DACA may never tell us who they are exactly. There is a reluctance to show documents. People come slowly. They're tentative. They don't like it when we require even SDYCD [sic] required sign in sheets, attendance sheets, a request for follow-up surveys and tracking and outcome. They're very reluctant, but slowly they come to the offices.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

114

They find the people the trust. They start to talk to us. We get their agreement. It's soft. We work with social service. We connect to them, NYLAG or Brooklyn Defenders or Urban Justice Center, and we have people that we talk to there. And they make appointments and switch the work towards legal services. And I also get worried about how this is going to happen under the MOIA HRA connection. It's taken a couple of years to get this up and going, and now I'm worrying about what the shift is going to mean, and are these people going to stay more in the shadows. I can understand how legal services once they're applying to come out, but these people are in the shadows. I don't want them pushed back. I want these warm programs. You--you don't need all--in order to see what's going on, all you have to do is visit our program, walk down the hall, look in the classrooms, see 15, 20, 25 students, a teacher. They're all actively engaged. That's all it takes to know that the program is working. It's--it's a--just 17 and I was really impressed by the--by the sophistication of--of you Councilman Menchaca, and of the other members who seem to really understand what's at the depth of this problem. I just really

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

115

5 though, oh, really, you guys already get it. So I  
6 was very happy.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Fish.

9 LAWRENCE FISH: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And--and--and I'll  
11 say this a couple more times later, but this is--this  
12 is a true vanguard. These chairs really represent  
13 the different committee relationships, committee  
14 focus areas, and we do get it--

15 LAWRENCE FISH: [interposing] I know you  
16 do.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --in that way. So  
18 thank you so much for that testimony and that  
19 personalization. We're going to move onto the next,  
20 and you can focus on any kind of even responses to  
21 what you've been hearing today especially from the  
22 Administration. What we want to do is get new ideas  
23 in testimony, and especially if you have already  
24 submitted testimony. Instead of reading it, maybe  
25 focusing on some areas that will be helpful in  
pushing this conversation forward. I'll ask if you  
can do that. Thank you.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

116

LAWRENCE FISH: Even right now I should  
continue or the next person? The next person, yeah.  
[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Mr. Fish, you got--  
you got some ample time today.

LAWRENCE FISH: [off mic] I appreciate  
it.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And--and very  
thoughtful remarks, too, by the way. We're going to  
keep you in the list of--of return--

LAWRENCE FISH: [interposing]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And if you could in  
your remarks. Also one of the things that we're  
wondering is were you engaged in a conversation by  
the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs or HRA about  
transition of potential obstacles that that would  
create? As you're speaking, all of you come back  
with that. Answer that question as part of your  
comments.

FREDDY ACEVEDO: Ready?

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay.

FREDDY ACEVEDO: Hi, my name is Freddy  
Acevedo. I'm a current Turning Point student. We're

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

117

based out of Brooklyn, Sunset Park and I myself I'm a  
dyslexic individual. Academically school was  
something that never necessarily came easy to me, and  
I did end up dropping out of high school. However,  
at the age of 22, I don't know--it was I literally  
woke up and I started kind of reflecting on where I  
was in life, and where I wanted to be and what my  
options were long term, and I really thought I needed  
to get my education together at that point. So I  
ended up finding Turning Point through a reference, a  
former graduate who obtained their HSE, and I wanted  
to check it out because they told me that, you know,  
they do cater to dyslexic students. And if they do  
have any kind of learning disabilities actually. And  
before I came to Turning Point, I was working retail.  
I was working retail for five years. Just dead-end  
jobs really going nowhere, and that's not what I  
wanted to do. So Turning Point in the classroom they  
actually--I was able to--I have everything that I  
need for HSE except for my math. So I'm very proud  
of that. They helped me accomplish, you know,  
everything academically that I really needed to and  
they still helped me to do so. But other than that,  
my personal development outside of the classroom,

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

118

which is really why I wanted to come and testify  
today. Because if you were to ask me a year ago  
about--about when I got started, would I even be ever  
able to sit up here and talk to you people--to talk  
to the City Council about, you know, being an  
advocate for an academic institution. I would never  
be able to do that and, you know, here I am today  
able to do that. And it wouldn't be the case without  
the personal development that I got at Turning Point.  
When I first--when I first came to Turning Point, you  
know, I thought I would just try to get my HSE and  
move on. But I never realized that now I'm actually  
looking at colleges as an option. Whereas, before I  
did that, I never thought college was going to be an  
option. Because like I said earlier, academics was  
never something that came easily. So, you know,  
thanks to Turning Point, now I'm looking at college  
and the--the potential future that I can have  
available to me. Prior to when I started, I could  
say Turning Point really saved the quality of life  
that I [bell] look forward to.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Freddy,  
and we wish you--we wish you luck.

FREDDY ACEVEDO: Thank you.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

119

IRFAN AHMED: Good afternoon. I wish to  
thank the Chairs and council members for holding this  
over--important oversight hearing on how New York  
City is educating its adult immigrant communities.  
My name is Irfan Ahmed and I'm with the Arab-American  
Family Support Center, and we stand in solidarity  
with the NYCCAL Community Partners with Students, who  
are all present today on this very important issue.  
We wish to draw attention to the adult education  
needs of the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South  
Asian population of New York City, which from here on  
in I will refer to with the acronym AMEMSA.  
According to the New York City Department of Planning  
the number of Arabs immigrants increased by one-third  
between 2007 and 2011, making it one of the fastest  
growing immigrant groups in the city. For South  
Asians we also see an increase between 1900 and 2010  
particularly Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Indians.  
Last but not least according to the Office of English  
Language Learners in their Demographic Report of  
2013-2014, it indicated that among the top five  
languages spoken in New York City Bengali and Arabic  
is at third and fourth place after Spanish and  
Chinese respectively. What we draw from our

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

120

experience of providing adult education and literacy services is that we recognize that there is a great need of English Language services. Unfortunately, many are put on waiting lists because we don't have the capacity or funding to help them. We have also attracted a very unique population of AMENSA women. We provide women only classes as well that are culturally competent and tailored to their needs. However, if those classes--if funding does not continue and those classes are not offered, they will be turned away. We recognize that many of the populations come from part of the world that is facing civil war, conflagration and conflict that has upended and disrupted their lives. These are populations that want stability, and a chance to restart their lives. We in particular look at our youth in which the U.S. Bureau surveyed households to determine which areas were linguistically isolated for children. Meaning that they were not in contact with English speakers over the age of 14 who spoke English very well such as their parents. The top ranked neighborhoods were Bensonhurst, Bayridge, Elmhurst, Coney Island, Jackson Heights and Sunset Park. All areas also know to have large AMEMSA



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

121

5 communities. We want to be beside them as they pursue  
6 their path toward self-sufficiency. and empower them  
7 along the way. We call upon city leaders to adhere  
8 to the recommendations of NYCCAL and restore and  
9 expand adult education funding. [speaking foreign  
10 language] Thank you.

11 [pause]

12 IRFAN AHMED: I would like to pass it on  
13 to one of our students who comes to our center. Her  
14 name is Mary.

15 [background comments]

16 MIRIAM: Good afternoon. My name is  
17 Miriam, and I am happy to be here today. I'm from  
18 Saudia [sic] and I am happy to learn English.  
19 English is important for me because it will help me  
20 to get a job. I--I need English so I can help with  
21 my--I can help my kids with their homework. I am  
22 excited my new life in America. AMEMSA helped--  
23 helped me stand up on my own two feet. With your  
24 help--with your help I get energy and improvement to  
25 become start--to become independent on my own. I  
want to thank you for your support.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: To both Mr. Freddy  
and Ms. Miriam, thank you so much for your testimony

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

122

1 today. I think in so many ways it's so important to  
2 put a face to the conversation, to the policy  
3 measures and both of you are examples of--of the  
4 benefits of the work that we're trying to do. And so  
5 I want to thank both of you for your courage today to  
6 be part of the City Council conversation. And I want  
7 to make sure that we have-- So are there any  
8 questions here from the council members? No. No  
9 Council member--no questions? And--and back to the  
10 original question that Council Member Arroyo was  
11 asking about whether or not you were approached by  
12 the Administration to be part of conversations, have  
13 you--have you been able to be part of any  
14 conversations about that--the new restructuring?

16 IRFAN AHMED: From my understanding not  
17 as of yet. We're trying to raise our profile so we  
18 can get more involved in these conversations because  
19 we think they're very important for our pop--the  
20 populations that we serve.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, great.  
22 Thank you, and again--

23 LAWRENCE FISH: [interposing] And from  
24 [laughs] and from my own experience also we were--we  
25 were really happy to see that some continuation of

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

123

5 DACA would be, or a variation would be considered,  
6 but it's kind of dismaying to hear just oh, it's  
7 going to move to MOIA and be administered by HRA. And  
8 we thought, well, how is that really going to work.  
9 I know it's---

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] And  
11 that's what we're--

12 LAWRENCE FISH: --to be smooth.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's what  
14 we're unpacking today, which is great.

15 LAWRENCE FISH: Yeah, I see you did.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We're going to get  
17 under the hood on this one for sure. Thank you so  
18 much.

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We've also been  
21 joined, we're looking at the next panel up. And  
22 we've been joined by the Honorable Rosanno Lopez  
23 Leon, from Puerto. We'll give her a big round of  
24 applause for being here today. [applause] She's a  
25 senator in Puerto Rico, and we're just so happy that  
you're here, and joining us in this very, very, very  
important conversation that I'm sure also has very  
similar roots and discussion in Puerto Rico. So

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

124

thank you for being here today. Okay, let's start  
from the left.

LOUIS WELZ: Is it on? Good afternoon  
and thank you Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugene and  
Barron and members of the City Council who are here  
for the opportunity to testify today. My name is  
Louis Welz, Chief Executive Officer of COJO Flatbush.  
I am testifying on behalf of COJO Flatbush and in  
support of other community-based organizations that  
provide English language classes for immigrants and  
their families. In 2014, nearly 100 adult immigrants  
and poor English speakers benefitted from COJO's  
adult literacy classes. Our work in the Adult  
Literacy Initiative has made our organization a  
trusted and familiar center for immigrants seeking  
this essential service. The city's funding for this  
program was transferred to our adult education  
contracts, but that contract is only--is only to  
provide HSE preparation and as a result, HSE  
preparation and as a result our vital Adult Literacy  
classes will close on June 30th.

I'm here today to tell the Council that  
the Adult Literacy Initiative is a--is vital to our  
Brooklyn community and critical to the success of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

125

city and its residents. It is a grave error not to increase our investment in adult education particularly on a national level President Obama has been pushing the country to adopt Comprehensive National Immigration Reform, advocating for young immigrants and families to gain a pathway to citizenship. The de Blasio Administration has also been at the forefront in integrating immigrants through education and creating access to better opportunities. However, unless we continue to provide means such as the Adult Literacy Program to help immigrants integrate, they will remain a desperate underclass in our society. Over 50% of the communities we serve in Brooklyn are comprised of immigrants.

Almost a third do not speak English well or at all. Our students come to class speaking Udu, Hebrew, Bashdu [sic], French, Arabic, Russian, Farsi, Cantonese, Spanish, Hindi and the list goes on. Our community is diverse. We all share a common goal of learning English. They often leer--the live near or under the Federal Poverty Level, struggling to find jobs and exploited in the process. They work in unhealthy conditions in nail salons and for little

pay, particularly as bus boys or car wash employees.

They are unaware and unable to access social services for their families and denied the rights, duties and protections that U.S. citizens take for granted. For these immigrants learning to speak and read English is the foundation of success for themselves and their families. Last month we asked our students to tell us what learning English meant for them, and I took a random of four examples. I can find a job if I speak English.

We are able to advocate for ourselves and avoid human rights abuses. I can help my children with their homework. We are able to understand our doctors and keep ourselves and our families healthy. In short, adult literacy allows--allows immigrants to access the education, services and gainful employment. It also protects their children, the next generation of New Yorkers because adult literacy among parents is the greatest determinant of children's future success outweighing other factors such as neighborhood and family income. To reduce this program's scope will only deepen the very inequality that Mayor de Blasio and our leaders in the City Council are working to fight. And leave

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

127

these families with little hope to become productive  
and prosperous community members. COJO strongly  
urges you to find a way to invest to expand the City  
Council's Adult Literacy Initiative for COJO and  
other community provides that provides these--that  
provide these classes throughout the city. Thank  
you.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Before you begin,  
were you involved in the conversation with the  
Administration at any level around the transition of-  
-transitioning of adult literacy from DYCD to HRA?

LOUIS WELZ: I think you would be happy  
to find out the way we found out. We put in--as they  
merged the two contracts, we submitted our work  
scope, and we got an email back say no, no, no ESLs  
any more. It's only HSE. So, no, there was no  
conversation, it's just that we were just--we were  
told what to do.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [off mic] Thank  
you.

NELSON YU: All right, good afternoon.  
My name is Nelson Yu. I am the Director of Adult

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

128

Education and Immigration at the Queens Community House. Thank you for this opportunity to share with you about our Queens Community House and the program we offer. QCH has been providing adult ESL literacy classes for over 26 years. The majority of the students are from Queens Community Districts 3 and 4. These districts include areas of Corona, Elmhurst, Forest Hills and Jackson Heights. These four neighborhoods alone have alone have a foreign born population over 50% with Elmhurst having 71% of the population foreign born. Te vast majority of immigrants in these areas come from countries demonstrating low English proficiency. Accord to the New York City Department of Planning's New York's newest New Yorkers while 6% of New York City's native born residents are not proficient in English. Over 50% of the city's foreign born residents lack English proficiency.

QCH's student includes populations with the highest rates of English proficiency over 50% Mexicans; 82% Ecuadorian; 75% Chinese; 74% Dominicans--70, and Bangladeshis at 58%. Our program provides intensive English language instruction taught by experienced dedicated and passionate



professionals most of whom worked full-time at one point, but due to cuts in adult education, we have to continually cut salaries and work hours. This greatly affects not only our dedicated QCH instructors, but limits the amount of instruction we provide for the community. Therefore, negatively impacting the educational consistency and attainment for our adult English learners. Our students also have limited income. Sampling a group of 107 students, 36% reported an income below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. Many in the sample are employed but in low-wage jobs.

Eighteen percent of our student base is between 18 to 24 years. Many students are parents seeking to better engage in their children's schooling and interested in becoming more involved in the local communities. English is a necessary tool for retaining employment, advancing in work, enrolling in vocational training and education opportunities leading to substantial employment, supporting their children's educational achievement, and being engaged citizens. The demand for English classes will only continue rise based on the increase in immigration pattern. A big concern of ours is the

cut to Young Adult Literacy. Without a competent level of English, young adults struggle to career jobs, salaries that can afford them and their families a basic standard of living. Our students are in firm belief that securing a good job with benefits to support themselves and their family English competency must--is a necessary skill.

Our courses provide these individuals with the tools and confidence necessary to succeed in American society. Many of our students are also parents, parents that want desperately to understand and support their child through school. A level of disconnect has developed between parent and child and the school because of this. Immigrant children are in Americanized school systems. Imagine going to a parent/teacher conference [bell] and not understanding what the teacher is saying about your child. Without the proper education, English competency for these parents has not developed. Parents are having difficulties helping their child succeed in schools. As educators we all know, as parent's--a parent's involvement is just as important as a teachers. As parents we want to be supportive and help our children grow. Based on recent

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

131

testimonials from our current students, it's one the  
biggest factors to why they out in these classes is  
to help their child. Two more paragraphs.

Queens Community House is about the  
Community. Our students are fully embraced and are  
welcome in the QHC--QCH family beyond just a  
registered student. One previous student of ours now  
works with our Housing Department at QCH. Students  
now are currently serving as volunteers to help  
advocate for our educational programs. Without  
continued support and funding, the embodiment of  
community cannot thrive in our diverse community.  
These English programs are not to teach English, but  
helps promote the embodiment of community in this--  
in--across Queens. The Queens Community House has  
programming for everyone of all ages from youth  
programming to senior care. We serve sons,  
daughters, grandparent and parents alike. We want to  
continue to do so. A cut in this funding would mean  
cutting out parents and young adults in the family  
community picture. Please continue the support and  
funding for the families and help their communities.  
On behalf of the Queens Community House, I thank you  
for your time.

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

132

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and can  
6 you answer that question as well whether or not you  
7 were part of the conversations in this?

8 NELSON YU: The simple answer is no.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Thank you.  
10 Kevin.

11 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Hi, good afternoon. My  
12 name is Kevin Douglas. I'm with United Neighborhood  
13 Houses of New York. I want to thank Chairs Menchaca,  
14 Arroyo, Barron and also Eugene for hosting this  
15 afternoon's hearing. I'll just start off with a  
16 couple of quick notes. We're a part of the New York  
17 City Coalition for Adult Literacy and fully endorse  
18 and support the recommendations we hear from our  
19 group leaders. So I'm not going to get into a lot of  
20 the detail about why literacy matter, and just sort  
21 of say--speak to that. To the question about whether  
22 we were engaged, I would say there wasn't a proactive  
23 engagement from the Administration directly to  
24 providers and advocates in the field, but in their  
25 sort of defense, they did make themselves available  
when we reached out and asked for that conversation.  
So we have had conversations with numerous  
commissioners from the City and representatives of

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

133

the Mayor. We haven't been crazy or happy about sort  
of the conversation results and really some of the  
cuts that we see in the budget, but there was a  
dialogue. And then just a final quick housekeeping  
note, if you will, is if you look around the room  
today, you'll see a lot of the students have pieces  
of paper that say Literacy Lifts and it talks about  
their own individual stories. We would really  
encourage you to go on Twitter Literacy Lifts in New  
York City, and really look at some of the stories  
about literacy matters to them so much. For  
purposes--

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [off mic] What is  
it? [sic]

KEVIN DOUGLAS: What the hashtag is  
Literacy Lifts NYC.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Literacy Lifts NYC  
hashtag. Got it. Thank you.

KEVIN DOUGLAS: Thank you. So for my  
testimony there's three quick sections. I'm just  
going to highlight a couple parts. One is just  
looking at the adult education as a whole, DACA and  
the Adult Literacy Initiative. In terms of adult  
education in the city, one of the main takeaways for

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

134

the Council should be just the significant lack of  
the investment in adult literacy services. We  
actually were at a point several years ago where the  
city was putting out an RFP for literacy services and  
had no baseline money in it. The only money in that  
RFP was the Council restoration money and federal  
pass through. And one of the sort of frustrating  
things to sort of sit in the crowd in the hearings  
over the year has been to hear the City talk about  
the amount of money available for adult literacy.  
And it not being clear I think to the Council that  
the money wasn't city, and there was no city tax  
investment. And much of the funding was for young  
adults. So they were not really looking at the full  
literacy population.

And I think part of the reason for that  
is that there has been a real lack of executive  
ownership in the Administration for this or the prior  
one for adult literacy. And we saw the Mayor's  
Office of Adult Education. That was eliminated in  
the last administration and folded into OHCD, Office  
of Human Capital Development, which is the precursor  
for the Office of Workforce Development today. And  
we hear from the Literacy Advisor from that office

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

135

today who really did a great job talking about sort  
of the work they're doing. But the fact remains we  
don't have a singular point of leadership or  
executive ownership in the city that says this is  
important, this is a priority. And I think that's  
something the Council should really look as you look  
at the question of city educates immigrants.

Something that wasn't raised at all today  
I think is important for you also to be aware of is  
the fact that federal policy is going to make it  
incredibly more difficult for immigrant New Yorkers  
to be served. Under the Workforce Innovation and  
Opportunity Act it's likely that the policy has been  
set forward and it will not allow the city to serve  
undocumented individuals. It would also make it very  
difficult to serve those who are at the lowest levels  
of literacy. [bell] So it will almost be a creaming  
effect. So this is another trend I think for the  
Council to take a look at. I reckon my time has  
expired so my last two points on DACA. One of the  
sort of critiques we've heard about the DACA program  
is sort of the lack of data on the number of DACA  
eligibles who actually served and moved forward. And  
we think it's just really important to note that this

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

136

was actually sort of by design and a recognition that the population in question, you know, needs to be part of a broader constituency, and it needs to be part of a broader community of people serving-- seeking literacy services.

And we think that was an important part of the success of the model is that literacy is available to immigrants at large, and people weren't sort of asked to raise their hand and self-identify and say I'm documented and I'm going to be in an undocumented literacy class. And we really want to make sure that the Administration really carefully considers that in the design of the program moving forward. The last piece on DACA and you guys had asked about this is about this sort of transparency in the transition. We are very concerned that there was very little communication to the field and to this day, today I don't think you got answers to the questions about what the new program model is going to look like, and how programs will be administered. We heard a lot about sort of plans and designs, but we don't know what those are. We have contracts that end next week, and provider students have nowhere to go. I did hear the Administration speak to the 4,100



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

137

who will lose literacy services next week and what  
the plan is for them, and I hope that this Council  
will continue to really work with them in the weeks  
going forward. Thank you.

LEAH ABER: Good afternoon and thank you  
Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Barron and Eugene and  
members of the City Council for the opportunity to  
testify today. My name is Leah Aber and I'm the  
Interim Chief Program Officer at Opportunities for a  
Better Tomorrow, a workforce development and  
immigrant services organization and also a member of  
NYCCAL. Just to quickly answer the question asked  
before, I was at the same meetings as Kevin and echo  
his sentiments. Since 2001, OBT has been--has been  
providing ESOL classes and adult literacy classes to  
over--and we now serve over 800 adults in Sunset Park  
Eastwood, Williamsburg and Bushwick. With DACA or  
DYCD funding cut of \$2.8 million, we're set to lose  
approximately 100 of those slots next week.  
Philosophy slots will have a devastating impact on  
our immigrant communities, particularly the  
communities we serve. There's a huge need in our  
communities and across the city as a whole. All of  
our programs have huge waiting lists of hundreds of

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

138

people. There's nowhere to send anyone. All of the providers have really wait lists and it's something that's concerning as this transition moves forward especially around DACA.

These hundred seats that we are--we might lose in a week are more than just English classes. They're an entryway to a whole host of community resources and services. It's really--and it's really important that we provide this resource to immigrants in our communities to integrate them linguistically and economically into the U.S. society. When immigrants enroll in English classes at one of our locations that offer and take advantage of their services that we provide including workshops on financial literacy, affordable housing and access to legal services as many of them are getting harassed and evicted out of their homes in gentrifying areas. Healthcare and also immigration services. The majority of our ESOL students are working and they're looking--they're also looking for better employment. They're looking to earn their High School Equivalency diploma, which is needed in most entry level positions now. And in addition, we're able to supplement our programs with job developers that help

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

139

1  
2 them with job placement assistance, job training, and  
3 also we offer advanced and basic computer skills  
4 classes.

5           So the loss of these ESOL slots will also  
6 mean the connection to other important services that  
7 we provide immigrants in our community. And would  
8 say probably the most important thing is that the  
9 cuts to the DACA Initiative are also a cut for a  
10 vital point of entry for many of those who are  
11 seeking DACA and DAPA services. As Robert Smith had  
12 mentioned earlier in his testimony as someone is more  
13 educated, they are likely to engage in DACA and  
14 eventually DAPA services. It's very frightening.  
15 There's a lot of myths and miscommunication around  
16 DACA. And being able to provide a whole host of  
17 services and especially ESOL services that many  
18 people are looking for in our community has been--has  
19 allowed us to make referrals for [bell] for DACA. I  
20 would say that we estimate over the last two years  
21 we've served over 100 eligible young adults who would  
22 qualify for DACA, who weren't referred to us by  
23 another organization or legal services. We were  
24 actually the ones who enabled--were able to meet  
25

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

140

those services. So thank you again for allowing me  
to testify.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you to the  
panel. I just want to underscore a couple of pieces  
that we can just keep on underscore is the--the  
entryway is really the--the kind of connection to and  
the gateway to other services because you are on the  
ground and really not losing your focus as we develop  
this new--this new model, this new outreach model.  
And then the other questions on your waiting lists,  
if one of you could just talk a little bit about--  
maybe Kevin you can talk a little bit the waiting  
lists. We heard over a year wait list. If you have  
any more to kind of expand on that piece. It seems  
to be the major urgent component to all this.

KEVIN DOUGLAS: Sure. So I think it was  
actually pretty shocking that the Administration  
shared the numbers today. 80,000 people served in  
New York City and 1.7 million in need. So that off  
the bat kind of tells you what you need to know. It  
sort of the way providers typically approach to the  
wait list are one of two ways. One, they say we're  
not going to have a wait list. They don't want to  
create a false sense of hope for people unless they

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

141

know that it actually means something. And for those  
who do have a wait list, it's often as you've heard a  
two-year or longer. As a coalition, we did an  
informal survey at the field last some of the CUNY  
programs, libraries, CBOs and what we found from them  
were just that small subset over 80,000 inquiries  
each year for services, and over 14,000 people were  
put on wait lists. So just in this very small survey  
we did within our own small field, it really just  
demonstrated that there's a significant wait list for  
services.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank  
you for that. Chair Arroyo, please.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Mr.  
Chair. So United Neighborhood Council I think as an  
umbrella organization and for the organizations  
sitting here individually. How many of you stand to  
lose the contract as of the end of this month, and  
how much are we talking about in terms of funding  
individually and the United Neighborhood Houses if  
you know the impact to your universe of member  
organizations?

LEAH ABER: So--so we have no information  
on whether or not we will lose our contract. We

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

142

assume that since there's been a huge funding cut  
that we will, but we still don't know as of next  
week. We have a \$120,000 contract for--

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Say that again.

LEAH ABER: We have a \$120,000 contract  
for the first piece.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: No the first part  
that you have.

LEAH ABER: [interposing] We--we don't  
have--

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Today is the 22nd of  
June. The fiscal year ends the end of this month,  
and today you don't know if you're going to have a  
contract moving into next fiscal year?

LEAH ABER: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Is that true for all  
of you? And United Neighborhood Houses if you can at  
some point get us a report on your member  
organizations what--what is the funding that we are  
concerned about.

KEVIN DOUGLAS: Absolutely, and I--and I  
can say for right now at least we have over half a  
dozen organizations meeting today Queens Community  
House, Shorefront Y, who are testifying; Arab-

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

143

American Family Support Center, and each of them is  
at risk at least of losing one or more contracts.

Many of them are contracted both for the ESOL as well  
as HSE or ABE, and the collective loss to our system  
is over \$700,000. But I will certainly get the  
specifics to you.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Council  
Member Barron. No questions? Okay. I will move  
onto our next panel. Thank you so much. Our next  
panel is Jennifer Valdes, Northern Manhattan  
Improvement; David Hunt [sic], Queens Community  
House; Sandy Myers, UJA Federation of New York,  
NYCCAL. Please come, and then for--for the--the last  
panel after that and if you have not submitted a  
slip, please do so. The last panel will be Sierra  
Stoneman-Bell from Make the Road; Jocelyn Mendoza,  
Make the Road; Margarita from NYLAG; and Maria  
Goodell, MFY Legal Services and that will be our  
final panel.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we're so  
excited that our--our great council member from the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

144

Upper West Side Helen Rose--Rosenthal is here as  
well. Thank you so much for joining us today.

DAVID HUNT: Good afternoon honorable  
City Council members, Chair Menchaca, Chair Arroyo,  
Chair Barron. Thank you for this opportunity. I am  
a Peruvian immigrant and an American citizen. I work  
as an ESL teacher or ESOL teacher, an immigration  
specialist at Queens Community House. I have  
submitted testimony. I would like to depart a little  
bit from this testimony and answer some of your  
questions. On Thursday I participated in an  
immigration task force meeting with the Mayor--  
Mayor's Office of the New Immigration Affairs or  
Immigrant Affairs. And the impression I got was the  
policy now is going to be geared towards volunteers  
and--and providing services through volunteers. To  
me it seems like the wrong approach, but there's no  
backbone, no structure to their approach. Volunteers  
just by definition are not people who are making  
money[laughs] and, therefore, cannot be relied upon  
to provide the type of stability and consistency that  
our students and immigrant community deserve. I--I  
wanted to also refer to the first panel member who  
testified. I believe his name is Malberto Alinde.



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

145

He talked about how he got involved in the criminal justice system before being a teacher and immigration specialist for QCH. I worked as a mitigation court expert/court advocate for my own agency and for a non-profit agency called the Osborne Association. My agency was called Defense Advocacy Services. Through 15 years I--I can tell that the problem with delinquency and deviant behavior stems partly or largely due to the fact that there's a lack of communication between parents and children especially immigrant parents. They're not able to communicate with their children. Their children, therefore, find another family outside of the household and start getting into trouble. A lot of my students nowadays they are in class to inspire their children, and also to prepare to communicate with their children effectively. Once they reach that critical age where they--they will look for support and independence outside the home. So classes are empowering. A system that does not consider the empowerment of immigrants as the centerpiece is a system that is bound to fail, or at least not be effective. So it will be a waste of money. It will be a waste of time. It will be a waste of resources, and it will

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

146

be a waste of the tremendous potential that  
immigrants have. I'm an immigrant. I had to learn  
English as a second language. Now, I teach English.  
I worked professionally in state and federal courts  
for 15 years. People pay me to write, to persuade  
judges and prosecutors, and now I'm teaching and now  
I'm helping other immigrants who want to become  
citizens, who want to apply for DACA. I think that  
from what I've heard our leaders in the City Council  
are on the right track. You guys know of the  
tremendous need for services, for more funds. And I-  
-I commend you for your efforts and your leadership  
in getting us the funds we need to serve our  
immigrant community. It is absolutely critical that  
we serve our immigrant community not only for their  
benefit, also for the benefit of the city. The  
immigrants are the foundation of the city. Even  
Republican mayors recognize that. And--and so we  
need your help. We need you to stand up for us, and  
the immigrants will not disappoint. They came here a  
long way to pursue their dreams, and they will  
realize their dreams if you give them the tools. Now  
an emphasis on interpreters and translators is not  
empowering. It is helpful, it is necessary, but it's

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

147

2 not necessarily empowering. And we want to empower  
3 our students to be self-reliant American citizens,  
4 and I hope that you help us in that endeavor. [bell]

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We're on--we're  
6 on--we're on the same page here. Thank you so much  
7 for your testimony. Thank you.

8 JENNIFER ANZARDO VALDES: Good afternoon.  
9 My name is Jennifer Anzardo Valdes and I'm the Senior  
10 Immigration Attorney at Northern Manhattan  
11 Improvement Corporation. NMIC was founded in 1979  
12 and has continuously offered quality education and  
13 legal services to Upper Manhattan and the Bronx  
14 communities. We provide an array of services to low-  
15 income community members including social services,  
16 legal services, adult education program, and  
17 workforce programs. Last the year alone, NMIC has  
18 served hundreds of clients, many who are documented  
19 and undocumented immigrants. The immigrant  
20 communities that we serve are concentrated in the  
21 Bronx and Upper Manhattan, which has the fourth  
22 largest foreign born population in the city. In the  
23 Washington Heights community 34% of the students in  
24 the public system--public school system are

25

registered as English Language Learners, the highest percentage in all New York City.

Adult education and legal programs are imperative for our community to gain the literacy, skills and the stability necessary to enter the hyper-competitive New York City job market. NMIC is very grateful to the City Council for its past adult education and legal DACA events, which have allowed us to create literacy programs that meet the ever-growing needs of our community. Currently, NMIC's Education Department offers ESL classes, pre-High School Equivalency, High School Equivalency classes and post-secondary placement into college and employment. Through the past DACA funding increases, NMIC was able to expand on their educational offering and increase the number of community members we are able to serve. Over the last year alone, NMIC's Adult Education Program has served over 200 DACA eligible clients. In our experience, 80% of the youth participants in the Council funded programs have increased their literacy level by at least one grade. In addition to academic instruction, DACA funding has allowed participants to receive one-on-one counseling directly with case managers. This has

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

149

increased the collaboration between NMIC's Education  
and Legal Departments as DACA eligible participants  
are assisted in assessing the multiple services  
offered at NMIC including education, legal job  
training and placement, as well as referrals to  
partner agencies throughout Upper Manhattan and the  
Bronx.

The case of Elsie and her family present  
an example of how our clients have benefitted from  
DACA funding. Elsie is a 22-year-old mother of three  
children from Pueblo, Mexico. She arrived in the  
United States at the age of six, and was unaware of  
her possibility for immigration relief. During one  
of her HSE classes, a representative from NMIC's  
Legal Department made a presentation to the class on  
ways to address their immigration status. Elsie  
requested an appointment, and personal screening from  
a NIMC legal member who determined she was eligible  
to apply for DACA. At the time filing an  
application, Elsie was unemployed and struggling to  
make ends meet for her three children. Thanks to the  
Council supported DACA funding, NMIC was able to  
assist Elsie with application fees. In December of  
2014, Elsie passed her HSE exam and her DACA

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

150

application was also approved. She now has an  
employment authorization card, and was able to obtain  
a Social Security number. She has benefitted  
tremendously for this approval.

Through the services she received from  
NMIC she is now employed full time thinking about  
college and on a sure pathway to self-sufficiency.  
[bell] Unfortunately, due to limited funding not all  
of our community members have been able to access  
services like Elsie. This limited access has left us  
with a current wait list of over 1,000 students  
seeking educational services. We expect this need to  
greatly increase due to the Executive Actions Plan  
to expand DACA and this new initiatives for DAPA.  
Almost half of the people who are estimated to be  
eligible for DACA and DAPA reside in the communities  
primarily reserved by NMIC. The availability of sets  
in the ESOL and HSE programs will be crucial to allow  
students to apply for DACA. Additionally, though  
DACA does not have an educational component, the  
skills learned in the education programs will be  
crucial for these adults to gain lawful employment  
status and to enter the workforce. With the loss of

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

151

5 funding for these programs NMIC will not be allowed  
6 to meet the demand in the community.

7 I know my time has wound up. So I just  
8 wanted to skip over to our recommendations, which is  
9 that we agree with the New York City Coalition for  
10 Adult Literacy and recommend that the Literacy  
11 Program of the DACA funding should be expanded to \$20  
12 million over the next two years. We also recommend  
13 an increase in funding for expansion of legal  
14 services for DACA and DAPA eligible persons. And we  
15 recommend that funding for the literacy portion to  
16 include funding for case management. These services  
17 are essential to assist the removable barriers that  
18 prevent smooth integration into employment. Case  
19 management focuses on final development, education  
20 opportunity, and employment preparation. Finally, we  
21 believe that these expansions of the aforementioned  
22 services are essential to successful implementation  
23 and seamless transition into the formal economy for  
24 most individuals. Thank you.

25 SANDY MYERS: Hi, everyone. Good  
afternoon and thank you to Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo,  
Barron and Eugene for the opportunity to testify  
today. So my name is Sandy Myers. I'm the Associate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

152

Director of Government Relations at the UJA  
Federation, and today testifying on behalf of NYCCAL,  
the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy. But  
UJA Federation also recommends the same--the same  
outcomes for this. So, just to be clear, I want to  
lay out what the NYCCAL recommendations are, and what  
we would really like to see included in the final  
budget negotiations and hopefully in the--in the  
Adopted Budget. So first, we're looking for a  
restoration of \$4.7 million for the 4,100 slots that  
were cut from DYCD and CUNY. The second is a \$5  
million enhancement to the City Council's Adult  
Literacy Initiative to create additional seats and  
that would really complement the city's workforce  
goals. So I'm go into those a little bit towards the  
end of my testimony, but just wanted that to be at  
the front. So as we heard many times today, we're  
really concerned about the 1.7 million New Yorkers  
who lack English proficiency, their High School  
Equivalency or both, and we really want to see a  
robust investment in trying to help that community  
meet its needs. As many of you saw, the recent New  
York Times articles about nail salon workers, really  
highlighted the abuse and exploitation that many



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

153

workers face with limited English proficiency  
everyday on the job. We also know that with limited  
English adults face numerous obstacles accessing a  
range of city services And I also want to draw your  
attention to the other piece of my testimony, which I  
included. This beautifully colored photographic,  
which really highlights all the investments that  
adult education help complement and how it really has  
roles in so many other aspects of day-to-day life  
from health to economic mobility, the budget,  
employment, workforce, aging. So on and so forth.  
So I would encourage you to use this, council members  
and staff in your final days of budget advocacy and  
really try to push this forward. But we know some of  
the statistics that we know from research and working  
in the field is that wages are 25% higher for adults  
who complete their high school degree or its  
equivalent. There is also a long-term investment in-  
-long-term benefit for the city in that every high  
school equivalency that's earned generated a net  
economic benefit of \$324,000 back to the city over  
the course of the course of that individual's  
lifetime. So despite that, we're concerned that

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

154

there still continue to be cuts to this program, and  
at the same time we're not meeting the growing need.

So to spend a minute on the DACA  
Initiative. So despite the success of this program,  
which I know you heard from folks today, we're  
concerned that budget includes a cut of \$2.8 million  
to DYCD and just under \$2 million for CUNY. And then  
shifts the program administration to HRA and MOIA. I  
want also to underscore that the cut will mean  
another approximately 4,100 immigrants and adults.  
Students will lose access to these classes in the  
next two weeks, and they will be cut short of meeting  
their goal whether they learn English and are  
ultimately earning their High School Equivalency  
degree. So we're very concerned about this, and as  
you heard from programs, they haven't even been  
notified yet about the cuts. So, we're recommending  
that restoration. You also heard from providers that  
the initiative was really structured in a way to best  
meet the undocumented population. [bell] We've have  
used literacy at that low barrier entry point for  
programs to be able to or for students to be able to  
access the programs. And they really benefitted from  
that, and there's a benefit of having classes that

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

155

are not just structured for undocumented immigrants,  
but really for people who are in need more generally.

So I'll wrap up quickly. So the other  
part is around the Adult Literacy Initiative. We  
really feel like this is a critical goal for a step  
in helping the city meet its workforce goals both  
from the Mayor's Office that you heard about before,  
as well as the City Council. And for adults who need  
that extra step before being able to access  
employment. This would be a critical first step that  
we would love to have the Council's support for.  
I'll stop there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you for your  
testimony. I've heard three different numbers as it  
relates to what you're seeking and looking for, for  
there to be a restoration. I've heard \$5 million.  
I've heard \$4.75 million and \$20 million. So is the  
a combination of the first two, and an addition or  
what are we looking for?

SANDY MYERS: Sure. So we would love to  
see a robust investment. For now the \$20 million was  
our ask kind of pre-exec of what we were really  
hoping to see included since the initial investment  
was for \$20 million. Right now, our big focus on--is

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

156

on restoring the cut. So that's the \$4.75 million and  
that supports the 4,100 slots, and that's an ask of,  
you know, of the city. We would love to see the  
Council and the Administration really work together  
on that. And then the other ask is the \$5 million  
City Council Initiative. So those are the two  
numbers that you should have in your model [sic] ,  
\$4.75--

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: [interposing] So,  
\$4.75 is asking the Administration to put back what  
they are eliminating?

SANDY MYERS: Yes. We would love to see  
that restored by the Administration, and if the  
Council were able to pick that up, we would certainly  
not turn that down either.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: That's \$10 million  
basically?

SANDY MYERS: Right, a total.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. Thank you.

SANDY MYERS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and--and  
as we--as we kind of run out these numbers, these--  
these numbers are connected to, and I--and I keep on  
coming back to the wait list conversation--

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

157

SANDY MYERS: [interposing] Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --but this is what  
we're talking about. The wait list really is  
connected to the robust funding. It takes it back to  
DYCD or I should say the previous DACA initiative-

SANDY MYERS: [interposing] Right.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --funding. So my-  
my question is--is this where we are, and just the  
restoration and enhancement for funding, does that  
get us to the wait list if for the last two years  
we've--we've been kind of in an initiative process  
with both legal and educational services? And really  
what's--how do we define that gap if--if we're seeing  
the growth in--in need for adult education?

SANDY MYERS: Yeah. Go ahead and I'll--  
I'll add.

DAVID HUNT: Well, we definitely need  
more funding. When I started at QCH--first of all, I  
forgot to mention I used to be a volunteer at QCH.  
When I was working as a litigation expert, my full  
ESL tutor from John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
worked at the Assistant Director of Adult Education,  
and they didn't have funding for citizenship classes.  
They didn't have funding for a lot of things. So, I

1 figured, you know, let me go into--I taught in  
2 citizenship class for free for year. So when I  
3 started at QCH working for QCH, there were five  
4 levels of classes. Now, there are three and now we  
5 are probably going to go down even lower than that.  
6 That's the waiting list. How to bridge the gap, more  
7 funding. More classes, more teachers. And yes, more  
8 volunteers. I'm sure there are people in the  
9 community who are willing to help, but not all  
10 volunteers are going to teach. Not all of them can  
11 handle the pressure of teaching. Teaching is not  
12 easy. So, more funding is the answer. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, and  
15 like I said, this is not a budget hearing, but the  
16 budget component talks about the policy pieces and  
17 we've already talked about the build it they will  
18 come process is just not going to work.

19 SANDY MYERS: Right.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So we keep on  
21 hearing that. So thank you so much for reiterating  
22 that and making that a strong point. I know that we  
23 have a MOIA representative here, too. So they'll be  
24 taking back notes as we continue this conversation  
25 because we are all--we are all working together on

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

159

this. Okay. I think that's it for this panel, and  
if we can get our final panel.

DAVID HUNT: Thank you so much.

SANDY MYERS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much  
for your testimony today. The last panel, Margarita  
from NYLAG, Myra, Jocelyn and

[background comments, noise, pause]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We can start--  
start with you on the left. Thank you.

JOCELYN MENDOZA: Hi. Good afternoon.  
My name is Jocelyn Mendoza. I have been an immigrant  
for 16 years. I come [sic] at Seedco and I am a  
transgender woman, and I study in the Make the Road  
New York to attain my High School Equivalency and  
diploma for one year now. I also am a student in  
English at the same time. This class is very  
important because I want to find a better job. In  
the past, I work and this is why I want to have  
something better now because as a trans woman I  
suffer discrimination in the workplace. I want to go  
to college to have some more opportunities. In our  
class--in the class at Make the Road New York, people  
have recently obtained their High School Equivalency.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

160

1 People want to get better jobs. People want to  
2 college or training programs. People want--want to  
3 be able to help their--the families. People want to  
4 get better wages. This class--this is class very  
5 important in the immigrant community including those  
6 who are in the community. Thousands of students are  
7 on the waiting list for class. They want to study  
8 starting now. Our communities can't wait any longer.  
9 Make the Road needs the resources and the  
10 opportunities to the immigrant community. For me,  
11 this means being like a second home. Thank you for  
12 your support for this class because I couldn't afford  
13 to pay for study. I hope the city will continue  
14 supporting a free class like ours. We need the Mayor  
15 and the city to continue to give more funds to this  
16 program. Thank you.

18 SIERRA STONEMAN-BELL: Hi, I'm Sierra  
19 Stoneman-Bell. I'm the Director of Adult Education  
20 and Career Pathways at Make the Road New York. You  
21 just heard from Jocelyn who's one of our students.  
22 Thank you for holding this hearing, and just raising  
23 this issue up as an important one. Given the timing  
24 of the hearing, I know budget negotiations are going  
25 on and this is not a budget hearing. But I'm just



COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

161

going to highlight the--the same budget priorities  
that go along with what you just heard from the  
Coalition for Adult Literacy. One is to restore the  
\$4.5--\$4.75 million for adult literacy classes for  
4,100 immigrant students, and to really avoid any  
disruption in services for those students who are  
currently studying. And as you heard earlier, we  
also have--we have classes running right now that  
will end this month, and we don't know what the--we  
don't know what to tell students at this point except  
that things are unclear. The--the second priority is  
to continue. The City Council has been a great  
supporter of adult literacy services, and we--we hope  
you will continue that and increase your support with  
\$5 million to the Council initiative. Make the Road  
Adult Education is a core part of our work to give  
community members the tools they need to live and  
succeed in the city. We have a large program of  
about 1,700 students. Each year, most immigrants  
from Latin America take our classes to learn English,  
to earn a High School Equivalency diploma, and to  
prepare for the U.S. Citizenship exam. Again, the  
theme of waiting list. We often have as many as 500  
students on the waiting list for new classes. And,

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

162

you know, our students study for many reasons. To improve their language skills and gain confidence, to access better jobs and wages, to get a diploma and go to college, and to be able to communicate with their children's teachers and doctors, and to learn about U.S. culture and how to navigate a new complex city. I handed in also a series of short blurbs that students wrote about, you know, why they take these classes and what they mean to them. So I mean a lot of those themes come out, but it's nice to actually see it in their own words. I encourage you to read those. You know, the--the economic and social benefits have been really well documented. I'm not going to go over them again, but I think the other piece is that it's a very--it's a very low cost with a huge benefit both for individuals and for the city as a whole. And the city has made really important recent progress with pro-immigrant policies. We want to see this continue, and I think adult education is a really core piece of that, and a piece of the opportunity structure in our city. And so, the--these proposed cuts to the city's DACA Adult Literacy program are--are out of sync with the current vision put forth by the city. So we really want to see

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

163

those reversed. We're--we're very concerned that almost 70% of the adult literacy component of that initiative has been slated for elimination and this kind of new--new plan. [bell] And for our program we will be forced to close the doors to 130 High School Equivalency and Adult Basic Education students who are studying for that program in Queens. And that would obviously be very damaging to--to our community. And I won't--I won't go over the workforce piece again. But again, I just want to stress that obviously we need a robust adult education system. It's the foundation of any effective workforce development system as well. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We invite all or any of you to come to our program at any point if you want to see the work in action and see the impact on people's lives in our community. And we're really counting on you all to lead the way, and we hope for some good results on the budget. Thank you.

MAIA GOODELL: Good afternoon

Chairpersons and members of the committee. Thank you so much for having this important hearing. My name is Maia Goodell. I'm from MFY Legal Services. Many of you know MFY envisions a society in which no one

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

164

is denied justice because he or she cannot afford an attorney. MFY provides free legal assistance to residents of New York City. At this point, more than 10,000 a year, but we also work to end the root causes of inequality. And we recognize that one of the ways to do that is through education, and specifically legal education. We submit this testimony focusing on the work of my project, which is workplace justice. Which may speak a little bit to the intersection between education and legal services that we've--we're hearing a little bit opposed to each other.

MFY is committed to innovative outreach and education about immigrants' legal rights. For example, we just started a medical legal partnership--an immigration clinic where we work with medical providers to identify DACA and other eligible immigrants. But we do want to highlight another key area of need today, which is training and employment rights. So, first of all and probably obviously immigrant New Yorkers benefit from information about their employment rights. We've heard a lot about the high levels of immigrant participation in the workforce more than their native born counterparts.

And yet more likely to be lower paid and working in high risk jobs. MFY serves hundreds of low-wage immigrants in job categories like nail salons, restaurants and other job categories with high rates of labor violations.

In MFY's experience, immigrants are less likely to be familiar with basic rights like minimum wage, overtime premiums and prohibitions on discrimination. And informing them of their rights can actually avoid violations from the outside. One quick example. We were giving a training to an ESL class. A worker came up to us afterwards and said, Is that really the minimum wage because I'm making so much less than that? We said, yeah that is the minimum wage, and it's illegal, and we talked to him about his legal rights to be protected against retaliation. He spoke to his employer, and his employer immediately raised his pay from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.50 an hour, which was then more than the minimum wage.

So I think that also highlights that avoiding disputes helps New York's businesses and courts and agencies. So we educate workers about what the law doesn't require. They may be familiar

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

166

with very different legal regimes that may, for example, require something like just cause, which, of course, is very different than our employment at will here in New York. We recognize that many immigrants are small business owners who benefit from hearing about their legal rights. So, we understand that they don't have the [bell] the opportunity to do a lot of formal course work in that. That's why we do one-on-one and small clinics and workshops and go out to ESL classes and other community-based organizations. Thank you for holding this important hearing, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

MARGARITA GUERROS: Okay, good afternoon Chairpersons and members of the committee. My name is Margarita Guerros. I'm a staff attorney with New York Legal Assistance Group. We a non-profit legal office that last year handled 42,000 case for New York residents. Over half of them were New York residents. As a legal service provider, our interaction with the Literacy Initiative, which we've been fortunate to be a part of since the beginning, it's primarily in terms of access. Where can our clients get access to these services, and what's the best place for them to be? One of my clients,

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

167

Manuel, he's--he applauds the way that these are atypical learners. He came in from Mexico at the age of 14 alone. No family in the United States. He was working up to three jobs at a time from the age of 14, and then shortly a few years afterwards he began raising one of his younger brothers by himself. He was fortunate at the age of 24 to attend one of DCYD's DACA programs where he learned that he was eligible for relief, and where he was able to receive literacy services. His class met at night. It took him about two years to finish it, and once he finally received his GED, he was able to find a job at a hotel in Times Square. He now works at the reception desk and his younger brother that he raised graduated high school. As we have spoken about repeatedly, these programs have wait lists. One of the benefits to the old DYCD's DACA program that we hope will continue is that our students get priority over these wait lists. And these we were able to place students who need help immediately, and we have trusted partners that we're able refer them to. The best programs meet at all hours of the day. Many of them provide childcare, and many of them provide access to other services such labor organizations. But, of

course, the best programs have the longest wait lists, and the longest commutes for students who already, you know, barely sleep. And some of our students unfortunately still don't have access at for an assortment of reasons. For example, my own legal site is with Translatina Network, which is a organization for transgender Hispanic Women. One of my clients told me that she deliberately goes into unfriendly programs so they get used to the idea of transgender women as human beings. So that other girls can follow her. You know, this particular woman she's one of my heroes, but I wish she didn't have to--she didn't feel the need to do this for other people. You know, we really hope that the City continues to invest in these programs. That they become available to everyone regardless of where they come from.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. So this concludes our panel discussion, and I just to say again thank you so much for your courage for being here, for continuing the advocacy for standing on the steps of City Hall as we continue to send this very, very strong message that focus and determination is a important. So thank you so much.



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
2 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
3 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
4 COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

169

2 And I'm going to--I'm going to give it over to the--  
3 the Co-Chairs and I'll have the final word, and I'll  
4 hand it over to Council Member--Chair Barron.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Mr.

6 Chair. I just want to thank all those who came to  
7 present testimony on this very important topic. We  
8 know that this is not a budget hearing, but we  
9 certainly know that we need money to achieve the  
10 objectives that we've heard talked about here today.  
11 And we're certainly going to advocate on behalf of  
12 what you've presented to us. So we know that as  
13 residents are marginalized, they're also often times  
14 abused and denied their rights. So, we're going to  
15 continue to fight so that we can have adequate  
16 funding to continue these programs. Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Council

19 Member Barron, and thank you for you for your  
20 partnership in this conversation, Chair Menchaca and  
21 Eugene. Thank you all for your testimony. The  
22 public portion of these hearings are my favorite part  
23 of the hearings because the Administration comes with  
24 a script and you don't. And often the information  
25 you provide for us helps us move the conversation

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

170

forward. Always in the spirit of being part of the  
solution, not part of the problem. So I thank you  
for your valuable input, and we will follow up with a  
conversation on this transition, and how successful  
it's been. So that we can discuss the challenges in  
the things that come up in the implementation  
process, and take the conversation back about how  
much more money you want. Or, you think we should  
invest that we certainly believe is funding well  
invested in our city. So thank you, Mr. Chair, for  
your leadership and thank you all for your time.

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And as we--as we  
close this hearing, this was a hearing that I think  
resonated in every borough, in every community  
crossing language--languages and immigrant  
populations. This is why I enjoy this work as the  
Chair of the Immigration Committee. And let's not  
forget also that this is a good day right now for  
immigrants in the city. We have accomplished so much  
in this Administration and partnership, and that's  
why we're demanding even more. We're not here to say  
that we've done enough, that our job is done. IDNYC  
has really proven some incredible fetes for a large  
municipality like this, and we're not going to stop

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

171

there. And what we're not going to do is either  
create models that don't work and/or that worked for  
one program that are obviously going to work for  
another program. And so, what we're going to do is  
challenge every piece of it, which is why we're  
including you as part of this conversation. So that  
if we do say something like the build it they will  
come does not work, that we come back and to really--  
and reshape it. And those conversations are  
important and we heard that today loud and clear.  
And that these community-based organization on the  
ground are offering these opportunities and these  
open doors and these relations that I think Mr. Fish  
said it over and over again, which is good. That we  
have to hold hands for our community members. And  
that relationship does not happen overnight. And so  
the branding concept does not seem right in this  
conversation. The other piece I want to underscore  
is the fact that we need a point person that our  
Chair Council Member Arroyo really pointed out the  
fact that we just do not have the lines connecting at  
every level. We feel good on the legal services. I  
get that. We don't feel good on the adult education  
components. And so all of us, this vanguard here,

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

172

Chair Barron, Chair Eugene, Chair Arroyo and myself  
are going to continue to point that out. And so that  
lack of accountability and leadership is an integral  
component in making this happen, and it's incredibly  
complex. And it's taken us time to get to this point,  
but we're here and we understand this issue. And  
then finally just as a person note for me being a  
Mexican-American in this city representing this  
population we heard today the true issue here on all  
the population. But looking at the urgency for the  
Mexican population is a--is a huge issue, and I'm  
thankful that the City Council is going to look at  
this as well as we look at that population that does  
not have the adult education necessary to even be  
able to apply for DACA or any of the other programs  
that come their way. That is a huge issue for the  
city, and we have to hit that straight on. And so,  
as we continue to move forward, I really leave you  
with the words of one of the members of the one of  
the ESOL classes through Sunset who got the chance to  
ride on a train here a couple weeks ago when we had  
that big--that big press conference. And she was  
talking to me about what she wanted for us to  
champion. She wants a better job. We talked about

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND  
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

173

that today. She wants to be able to help her kids  
with their homework. She wants to be able to  
participate in the PTAs with--with confidence. And  
finally, she's like, you know what, I--I want to find  
love. She's also single and she want to find love.  
And so, when I think about this is--this is just how  
we live as New Yorkers. These are all the pieces  
that make us New Yorkers, and there should be nothing  
as a hurdle to stop us from making that happen. And  
so, I applaud you all for your testimony today, and  
we look forward to reaching some victories short term  
now and in the very near future. Thank you so much.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It now ended.

This hearing has now ended.

[gavel]

1	COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES	174
2		
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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 June 25, 2015