Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Office of
Immigrant Affairs
Nisha Agarwal
Commissioner

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Testimony of Commissioner Nisha Agarwal,

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Before a joint hearing of the New York City Council

Committee on Immigration, Committee on Higher Education, Committee on Community Development, and Committee on Youth Services:

"Oversight — How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community?"

Introduction

Thank you to Committee Chair Menchaca and the members of the Committee on Immigration, Committee Chair Barron and the members of the Committee on Higher Education, Committee Chair Arroyo and the members of the Committee on Community Development, and 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 programs that promote the well-being of immigrants in New York City and facilitate their 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.

We are New York

The first program I want to discuss is the We are New York program (known as "WANY"). The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is the home of WANY, an Emmy-Award winning educational television 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 useful 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 conversational English curriculum, WANY also supports grassroots organizations within immigrant communities. Community-based organizations, cultural institutions, labor unions, and many other organizations have hosted WANY classes. Such a community-based approach to education and information sharing is consistent with the de Blasio administration's overall approach to outreach and engagement.

Executive Action

I am also happy for the opportunity to discuss the second program I want to cover in my testimony today: MOIA's DACA Education Initiative, which is part of our larger local program to implement the President's executive action on immigration. MOIA is designing the model for this program in partnership with the Human Resources Administration (HRA), who is helping to administer it by assisting with the procurement process. One of MOIA's key priorities is to support legal and community services for immigrants at scale so that the maximum number of New York City residents can obtain safe, high-quality information and assistance about their immigration options. 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 (DACA) program, as well as immigrants who may be eligible for expanded DACA which was announced by the White House last year, or the DAPA program for the parents of US 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 be focused 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 an 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 helping 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-funded program that was developed in 2012 with the start of the DACA program, and now are looking forward to working together to help more DACA-eligible New Yorkers participate more fully in the City's social and economic life.

Background on Executive Action and Citywide Response

On June 15, 2012, President Obama announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (or "DACA"). The program offers an opportunity for certain undocumented young people who meet the program's residence and education requirements to obtain a work permit and to 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 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. [1] If we were to include both potentially eligible and immediately eligible populations – meaning individuals that would qualify for DACA short of the educational requirement in addition to individuals who already met all criteria including the education requirement – then the application rate falls to 37% in New York State. This rate – 37% - is also the same rate of uptake across the country for 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 most to low applications 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 proof of residency. The President's executive action is projected to offer relief to millions of undocumented immigrants nationwide. We estimate that in our City alone, administrative relief would positively impact approximately 200-000-230,000 undocumented New Yorkers.[2]

Despite the entry of a temporary preliminary injunction on 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,

[1] Migration Policy Institute, DACA At the Two-Year Mark, August 2014
http://migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/DACAyouth_EstimatesRangesACS2012-SEC.xlsx
[2] 2011-13 American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC's Center for Economic Opportunity

such as IDNYC. As part of these efforts, we will incorporate the DACA Education Initiative into this broader model for executive action.

It is important to note that the federal ruling does not affect the existing DACA program. Individuals may continue to come forward and request 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 plans to connect immigrants with legal services and access to educational and vocational training opportunities 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 that need them.

Scope of the Challenge

Our approach to the DACA 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 low application rates 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 that have not yet applied for DACA but are potentially eligible.

For purposes of today's discussion, when I refer 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 75,000 to 85,000 potential DACA recipients in New York City, there are approximately 24,100 total New Yorkers who may be eligible for original and expanded DACA but for their ability to meet the education requirement.[3]

According to 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 immigrant residents in our City. Notably, 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 (54%) of all DACA applicants that filed

[3] 2011-13 American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity

were under the age of 21.[4] 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.[5] Moreover, compared to the immediately DACA-eligible profile, this population is more likely to lack English proficiency, have less than an 8th grade education, 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 high 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% –lives in either Brooklyn or Queens, and nearly a quarter resides in the Bronx.[6]

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 but 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 the 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.[7]

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 their 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

[4] Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, Local insights from DACA for implementing future programs for unauthorized immigrants, June 2015 http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/08/14-daca-immigration-singer
[5] Migration Policy Institute, Diploma Please: promoting educational attainment for DACA and potential DREAM Act eligible youth, September 2014 http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/diploma-please-promoting-educational-attainment-daca-and-potential-dream-act-eligible-youth
[6] 2011-13 American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity
[7] Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, Local insights from DACA for implementing future programs for unauthorized immigrants, June 2015 http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/06/04-daca/BMPP_Srvy_DACAImmigration_June3b.pdf?la=en

for DACA.[8] When all these factors are coupled together, it results in a population that is extraordinarily and uniquely difficult to reach.

Addressing the Challenge

To address this challenge, MOIA will update the program design utilized by DYCD under the Council's 2012 DACA program and tailor it to the 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 and/or vocational training directly to potentially eligible DACA individuals instead of funding general literacy seats with the hopes 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 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 planning 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 access to a work permit, a Social Security Numbers, eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), 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 or vocational programming that is necessary for DACA eligibility, but that they also receive the training and support that 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 responsibilities, our proposed service model will feature a stronger link

[8] Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, Local insights from DACA for implementing future programs for unauthorized immigrants, June 2015 http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/06/04-daca/BMPP_Srvy_DACAImmigration_June3b.pdf?la=en

to wraparound 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 than traditional classroom bound programs.

With New York City at the forefront of national immigration reform and inclusion, we believe that the City can spearhead this model for educational programming that will be positively transformative for potentially DACA-eligible immigrants. Bringing individuals out of the shadows and providing access to work authorization, better jobs, health insurance and other social benefits will help address many facets of inequality faced by this population.

Conclusion

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 DACA-eligible 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 for the opportunity to address these Committees.

City Council Testimony

June 22, 2015

Good afternoon Chairperson Menchaca, Chairperson Arroyo, Chairperson Eugene, Chairperson Barron, and members of the City Council Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education. I am Stacie Evans, Literacy Advisor in the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. My job is to support, strengthen, and expand New York City's adult education system. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about education opportunities for adult immigrants. As a former adult literacy instructor and program director with twenty-five 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, the Mayor wanted to ensure that the City's annual workforce budget was being strategically invested in programs that increase economic opportunity, improve job quality at the low end of the wage spectrum, and deliver higher quality services 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 10 recommendations to fulfill his workforce system vision. The Mayor's goal is to build 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 programs and services. Adult literacy plays an important role in the City's new vision for the system, which I will discuss in a moment.

The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (WKDEV) is tasked with implementing the Mayor's Career Pathways plan, working with twelve City agency partners, as well as employers, labor, education and training providers, the Workforce Investment Board, philanthropy, and community stakeholders to create a workforce system that more effectively meets the education, training, and employment needs of city residents. WKDEV's goals are to a) build skills employers seek, b) improve job quality, and c) increase system and policy coordination. Achieving these goals will increase stability and mobility opportunities for city residents, while providing employers with the homegrown talent they need. WKDEV adds value to the system realignment process through our focus coordination, aligning City workforce programs around the common goal of improving job 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 and/or a high school diploma. Twenty-five percent of HRA Back-2-Work clients test between the 7th and 10th grade level. Up to 30 percent of DYCD's out-of-school youth population tests between the 5th and 7th grade level. These 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 needs, 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 comes from city, state, and federal funding streams as well as 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 adults who need to develop their facility and fluency in English.
- Young Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education (ABE) – These classes provide basic skills instruction for youth and adults with reading and math levels below 9th grade.
- High School Equivalency (HSE) – These classes for youth and adults with 10th to 12th grade reading and math levels prepares students to take the TASC exam (formerly the GED) and receive their HSE diploma.
- Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – These programs for 16- to 24-year-olds offer a variety of services including ABE and HSE classes
- Literacy Zones – There are fifteen Literacy Zone projects in New York City. These programs are part of a 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 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 a basic education/tech training program in partnership with Per Scholas. In Sunset Park, Turning Point, Lutheran Family Health Centers, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, the Center for Family Life, and Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation work together to provide a range of education, training, and wraparound services to support the educational and career advancement of out-of-school youth.

The system serves roughly 80,000 New Yorkers at an investment of $85 million. Through analysis of those numbers, we see that the lion's 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, ABE, 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/employment outcome is bridge programming.

Coordinating the development and 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 postsecondary 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 pair educational instruction with a workforce and 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 handoffs between the basic education provider and the destination program, and support services, including college and career counseling and transition support.

Integrated or contextualized instruction allows students with lower levels of proficiency to engage with job- or sector-focused material early. There is 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. LaGuardia's GED Bridge program – which has since grown and expanded into the College and Career Pathways Institute – was designed for low-income individuals who did not have a high school diploma or a 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 percent compared with 47 percent).

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 percent passing the exam compared with 22 percent of prep class students.

Higher rates of postsecondary enrollment. GED 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 lifelong 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 organizations and will reshape existing young adult literacy programs. CEO will also conduct a random assignment 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 initiative, CEO, CUNY, and WKDEV have just launched "Building Bridges," a month-long professional development series on bridge program design. A week ago, more than 125 staff from adult education and training programs came together for the kick-off session. Bridge is the foundation of a strong career pathway. As such, we are committed to robust and intentional support of organizations and agencies implementing bridge programs. CEO is developing ongoing, specialized technical assistance for agencies and organizations launching new bridge 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.

New York Public Library

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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

Oversight - How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community?

JUNE 22, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Adriana Blancarte-Hayward and I am the Outreach Manager for Immigrant Affairs for The New York Public Library (NYPL). Thank you to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chairs Carlos Menchaca, Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Mathieu Eugene, and Inez Barron, as well as the members of these committees and the City Council.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to join you today and speak about what the New York Public Library is doing to help adult immigrants succeed across our three boroughs. The NYPL is the nation's largest public library system, featuring a unique combination of 88 neighborhood branches and four scholarly research centers, serving all New Yorkers throughout our locations in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island.

We are a city of immigrants. 37% of us, 3.1 million people, were born in another country. Another one-quarter of the city are first generation Americans. Of all New Yorkers ages 5 and over, 49% speak a language other than English at home and 23% of those people are Limited English Proficient (LEP). To serve our diverse immigrant population NYPL offers a range of services in multiple languages. We work hard to make sure that all immigrants feel comfortable and safe in public libraries. We know that they have serious needs that must be addressed, and we are proud to help meet their educational needs.

Today I would like to talk about five library initiatives that we offer to our adult immigrant community: English literacy and language classes, technology training, financial literacy, small business support and citizenship information.

Adult Literacy

For more than one hundred years the New York Public Library has provided language instruction to help immigrants learn English and improve their reading and writing. Patrons come to the Library to improve their English so they can advance their careers, connect to their communities or help their children succeed. Unfortunately there are not enough seats at high-quality educational programs in New York to meet the needs of our large immigrant community.

Three years ago, the New York Public Library began an aggressive expansion of our ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes offerings. In only three years we have expanded our ESOL offerings by 400%.

Today NYPL provides ESOL classes in 34 library locations serving more than 10,000 students. Classes are sequential and students can progress through several levels until they reach English proficiency. As

of spring 2015, the Library's ESOL initiative is one of the largest, free, teacher-led programs in New York City, after the Department of Education and The City University of New York (CUNY).

The Library's ESOL classes fill critical gaps in adult educational services across this City. 80 % of students surveyed in Winter 2015 say they have no other location to improve their English. The Library is hoping for an increase in 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 'We Are New York' series developed by the Mayor's Office and CUNY.

Technology Training

In 2012 NYPL launched its *TechConnect* pilot to offer expanded computer access and technology training for New Yorkers. The Library offers technology classes at over 80 branch libraries throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island and one-on-one help via open labs. Many classes are also taught in Spanish, Chinese and Bengali at selected locations depending on community needs. Materials are also available for self-learning on the website in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and French. Classes are available for all skills levels from beginners learning internet basics to more advanced users who want to learn computer programming skills.

Financial Literacy

This spring the library launched a new financial literacy program to help immigrants with basic skills like savings, budgeting, housing, debt, credit, banking and personalized support to help them make the most out of their finances. The Money Matters program covers basic financial education topics through workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions. Sessions are delivered by trained volunteers who have gone through a Personal and Consumer Finance course with the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, Office for Financial Empowerment. This program is presented in Spanish, Mandarin and Cantonese at 11 neighborhood branches.

Small Business Support

Nearly half of the City's 220,000 small business owners are immigrants. To help meet their needs NYPL provides free on-site business courses in multiple languages at selected locations, and multilingual materials and information on City services available to assist immigrants looking to start or grow a business in New York City, in partnership with NYC Small Business Services. Our Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) provides resources for business owners through its Immigrant Business Connection web portal, a joint project with NYC SBS, the Fund for Public Advocacy, and Citi Community Development.

Citizenship Information

Finally, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, NYPL has established New Americans Corners at every library branch. These easily accessible public spaces provide information and materials on citizenship and immigration.. Citizenship classes are also offered at selected locations to ESOL students.

Through its diverse programs and services NYPL is helping our immigrants find their way and succeed in New York City. As you make your final decisions about what to fund in this year's budget please support libraries and the essential services that they are providing to this City's diverse and dynamic immigrant community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Testimony presented to the New York City Council Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services, and Higher Education
Oversight Hearing
June 22, 2015

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

I am Sierra Stoneman-Bell, Director of Adult Education and Career Pathways at Make the Road New York (MRNY). Make the Road is a non-profit organization that builds strength and opportunities in working class immigrant communities. We operate 5 community centers in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Long Island and serve over 10,000 people every year through community organizing, policy innovation, education, and high quality survival services. MRNY is an active member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), and today my testimony will focus on the importance of supporting adult literacy services for immigrant New Yorkers.

Given the timing of this hearing, I want to highlight two key budget recommendations that will impact how the city provides educational opportunities to immigrants:

- **Restore $4.75 million for adult literacy classes for 4,100 immigrant students** and avoid disruption of services for students currently enrolled. If the proposed cuts to DYCD and CUNY literacy programs under the DACA Initiative are implemented, thousands of students will immediately lose access to their English language and High School Equivalency classes, and community-based programs will lose critical capacity.

- **Expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative to $5 million** to promote workforce success and assist 4,000 low-income and immigrant New Yorkers to develop the literacy and language skills they need to participate in the city's new Career Pathways strategy.

At 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 this city. Over 1,700 adult students, most of them immigrants from Latin America, take our classes each year to learn English, earn a High School Equivalency Diploma, and prepare for the U.S. Citizenship exam. We often have as many as 500 students on the waiting list for new classes. One of our students, Joselyn Mendoza, will also speak with you today.

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, 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. Our teachers apply a popular education approach where the curriculum is centered on the experience of the students and themes directly relevant to their daily lives. And students find a community of peers who are overcoming similar challenges and, together, they build community resilience.

MRNY is one of many community-based adult literacy programs that generate enormous benefits for individuals and the city as a whole. The economic and social benefits have been well-documented, and at a cost of less than $1200 per student, these classes are an incredibly efficient investment.

The city has made important recent progress with pro-immigrant policies. We want to see this continue with adult education as a core piece of the opportunity structure. The proposed cuts to the City's DACA adult literacy program are out of line with the current vision put forth by city leaders, and should be swiftly reversed. The DACA Initiative was an $18 million initiative launched in 2012 to ensure that immigrant New Yorkers had the opportunity to access and benefit from the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. Adult education has been a key part of the approach, paired with nonprofit legal services and community outreach. We are very concerned that almost 70% of the adult literacy component has been slated for elimination in the executive budget plan. If the $4.75 million in cuts to CBOs and CUNY programs are not restored in the final budget, over 4,000 immigrant students will lose their classes before achieving their goals. MRNY will be forced to close the doors to over 130 ABE/HSE students in our program in Queens. With enormous community demand and new immigration relief on the way, this is not the time to lose community capacity. We should build on what we have started.

A strong adult education system is also crucial for an effective workforce development strategy. Under the City's new Career Pathways approach, greater emphasis will be placed on helping individuals develop the skills and credentials they need to access good jobs with opportunities for advancement. We are pleased to see a new interest in creating and funding "bridge" programs to prepare people for career track training programs. However, many of the 1.7 million New Yorkers without English proficiency or a high school diploma will not be able to even enter these programs without intensive literacy development. We need a robust adult literacy system at the foundation of a successful workforce development approach. Otherwise, low literacy and immigrant New Yorkers will be left out yet again.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We invite you to visit our program to see this work in action. Thousands of dedicated students are counting on you, as our city leaders, to demonstrate support for adult literacy programs in the final city budget. We look forward to working with you to ensure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to continue their education and participate fully in the life of this great city.

NYLAG
NEW YORK LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP

Testimony by New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

before New York City Council Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development, and Youth Services

Oversight: How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community?

June 22, 2015

Chairs Menchaca, Barron, Arroyo, and Eugene, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services about the needs of New York City's immigrant adult learners. I commend the Council for holding this hearing and appreciate all the work you are already doing to increase immigrant access to City services. My name is Margarita Guidos, and I am a Staff Attorney at the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG). NYLAG is a nonprofit law office dedicated to providing free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers. NYLAG serves immigrants, seniors, veterans, families facing foreclosure, renters facing eviction, those in need of government assistance, children in need of special education, domestic violence victims, persons with disabilities, patients with chronic illnesses, low-wage workers, members of the LGBTQ community, Holocaust survivors, and others in need of free legal services.

Last year, NYLAG handled 42,000 cases for New York residents, over half of whom were immigrants. Through our extensive work with the immigrant community, we have found that whether a New Yorker has been here for years or has only just arrived, lack of English proficiency is one of the biggest barriers to upward economic mobility. Immigration legal assistance and education are twin solutions to many of the problems that this population faces. NYLAG has been honored to be a part of the Adult Literacy/ Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Initiative program, a collaboration between the City Council and the administration that addresses both immigration status and literacy, since its inception in July 2013. At NYLAG, we work with immigrants, young and old, on a daily basis who benefit from the services provided under this Initiative, which are tailored to their unique needs. These services are critical in the current climate, in which administrative relief has been stalled by an injunction and the City continues to see a surge of immigrants from Central America seeking refuge from their war-stricken, gang-ridden, and dangerous home countries.

Nearly a quarter of the City's population, some 1.8 million persons, have limited English proficiency. 50% speak a language other than English at home. Along with immigration status, literacy and adult education programs are critical to integrating these populations into the fabric of New York City. One of my clients, "Manuel," embodies this necessity. Manuel was the oldest of seven children born to a farming family in Mexico. Unable to feed their children, Manuel's parents sent him, alone, to the United States at the age of fourteen. At an age when most American teenagers are in school and making friends, Manuel was alone, living in a boarding house, working two and sometimes three jobs as a dishwasher, bus boy, and construction worker – anything he could find. He longed to learn English and get a high school

diploma, but there were not enough hours in the day and not enough opportunities for him to learn. At the age of 24, he met a NYLAG attorney at a community event sponsored by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) as part of the Adult Literacy/DACA Initiative. While he came to the event looking for assistance with his immigration status, Manuel learned about a free ESOL class that graduated into a GED class while he was there. The class met at night, in some of the few free hours that he had, and it allowed him to improve his English while studying towards a high school equivalency degree. After a few years, and several stops and starts, Manuel achieved one of his goals – he received his GED last year. The impact that this event had on his life was significant. With a GED, his new English skills, and his deferred action status, Manuel was eligible for better jobs. Today he works at a hotel in Times Square, confidently handling the reception desk. Without the City's Adult Literacy/DACA programming, Manuel may never have known he was eligible for legal assistance and educational programs.

Many of New York City's immigrants came from places like Manuel. Even very young arrivals feel the pressure of working to survive and feed their families. They have limited resources and even less time. The best programs – such as SoBRO, the YWCA, and Make the Road – meet clients where they are, offering multiple levels of study and classes throughout the day and night. Some programs even offer childcare. Best of all, students learn about more than the ABC's. In addition to graduating into accredited GED programs, students gain confidence, learn job readiness skills, make friends, meet community members and learn about other programming offered by the organization and their partners. The Adult Literacy/DACA Initiative has ensured that NYLAG has a list of trusted partners to which we refer DACA clients within their own neighborhoods and communities.

In addition to the DYCD-sponsored events, NYLAG offers informational sessions, trainings, and immigration screenings at these organizations to speak to students about deferred action and other forms of immigration relief. NYLAG has a robust community clinic model that brings wraparound immigration services to under-served immigrant communities in local City Council district offices, churches, schools, libraries, and other event spaces. We bring a team of our staff and pro bono volunteers to screen attendees for all potential forms of immigration relief, offer onsite application assistance for citizenship and DACA, and are joined by key City partners that bring relevant social services to the clinics – including information on enrolling in DACA initiative funded programs and access to literacy programs. Over the past 8 months, NYLAG has conducted 7 such clinics as part of the City Council's Key to the City Initiative, joining the New York Immigration Coalition to provide comprehensive services to more than 700 immigrants within their own communities. DYCD's Adult Literacy/DACA Initiative events and the City Council's Key to the City events have both shown the City's commitment to providing access to both legal and social services to New York City's immigrants.

We hope that the City will consider increasing funding to allow for expanded adult education programs. While many such programs offer the flexible class hours, childcare, and location to allow busy working immigrants to take classes, not all of them do. The best programs often end up with months-long waiting lists, by which time a student may no longer be able to participate. Other students end up taking long commutes from work and home to any program that has an available spot. It is not surprising that our most vulnerable clients are the ones least likely to begin or complete a program at all because of these backlogs and restrictions.

In the future, we also hope there will be further focus and funding put toward programs supporting LGBTQ immigrants. In addition to the myriad issues they face due to lack of immigration status, this population is further subject to the stigma against LGBTQ people in many communities. I staff a site at the Translatina Network's space at the AIDS Center of Queens County. A support group for transgender Latina women that takes in any LGBTQ person who asks for help, Translatina is an invaluable resource for its members. Often alone, isolated, and dealing with illness, first-time Translatina visitors find a safe and respectful place to make friends and access legal, health, and educational resources. I am honored to be one of several attorneys that provides access to legal services for this population.

While the LGBTQ population in Queens has some of the safest and best access to healthcare through City services, and increasing access to legal services, I find that among my clients, they have the least access to literacy. One of my clients, "Ana," told me, "I go into these places that aren't comfortable with us. It takes a long time for the other people to realize that I'm a person just like them. After me, it's easier for the other girls." I was moved by Ana's willingness to put her own well-being at risk for the sake of making these programs available to other people, but she shouldn't have to. All adult learner programs should be safe, culturally sensitive places for all people, regardless of where they are from or the identities they have. We hope that the City will continue to work to fund programs that provide services to particularly vulnerable people and communities. This includes not just LGBTQ persons, but minority language speakers from Latin America, the elderly, and other populations that can find themselves shut out from mainstream programs.

Given the great success of the current programs, it is our hope and expectation that these programs continue to grow and expand the number of legal and social services partners involved. We would be happy to discuss our proposals further and look forward to working together to ensure that immigrant seniors are able to access the City services they need to stabilize their lives. Again, we commend all those who have already worked to address these important issues. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully submitted,

Margarita Guidos
Staff Attorney, Immigrant Protection Unit

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TESTIMONY

ON

HOW NEW YORK CITY IS EDUCATING ITS ADULT IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

PRESENTED BEFORE:

THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTED BY:

MAIA GOODELL
MFY LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

June 22, 2015

MFY Legal Services, Inc. (MFY) submits this testimony to New York City Council Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services of the New York City Council concerning education of the adult immigrant community in New York City.

MFY envisions a society in which no one is denied justice because he or she cannot afford an attorney. To make this vision a reality, for over 50 years MFY has provided free legal assistance to residents of New York City on a wide range of civil legal issues, prioritizing services to vulnerable and under-served populations, while simultaneously working to end the root causes of inequities through impact litigation, law reform and policy advocacy. We provide advice and representation to more than 10,000 New Yorkers each year. We submit this testimony based on our experience with clients from MFY's Workplace Justice Project (WJP), which advocates on behalf of low-income workers most vulnerable to exploitation and handles a range of employment problems, including wage and hour violations and workplace discrimination.

MFY commends the Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services for holding this hearing about this important topic. MFY works to provide outreach and education to immigrant New Yorkers about their legal rights in a range of areas in innovative ways. For example, MFY just started a medical-legal partnership Immigration Clinic with Bellevue Hospital, seeking to identify immigrants with DACA and other eligibility by working with medical providers. MFY also trains immigrants about their rights to public benefits. Today we would like to highlight another key area of need: training in employment rights.

Immigrant New Yorkers Benefit from Information about Employment Rights

Immigrants form almost half of New York City's workforce and participate in the labor market in higher numbers than their native-born counterparts. Yet immigrants are lower paid and more likely to work in jobs that are not managerial or professional.[1] MFY serves hundreds of low-wage immigrants in job categories with high rates of labor violations: nail salons and restaurants, staffing agencies, home health and domestic workers, and other similar work.

Immigrants are, in MFY's experience, likely to be unfamiliar with rights such as minimum wage, overtime premiums, and prohibitions on discrimination. Therefore, we make it a priority to educate immigrant workers on their rights. In the past year we trained hundreds of immigrant workers at community-based sites. Through education, MFY seeks to empower immigrants to assert their rights. Informing the immigrant community of legal standards can resolve or even avoid violations of employment rights. For example, a worker came up to us after we did a presentation to his ESL class. He asked if the minimum wage was really what we had said; he was being paid substantially less per hour at his supermarket stock clerk job. We explained that was not legal, and also explained the legal protections against retaliation. He was naturally afraid of losing his job, but he ultimately decided to speak to his boss. His employer

[1] Department of City Planning, City of New York, *The Newest New Yorkers: Characteristics of the City's Foreign-born Population*, 2013 Ed. 104-18, (Dec. 2013), *at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/nny.shtml.*

immediately raised his pay from $7.25 to $8.50 per hour (which was above the minimum wage at the time).

New York Businesses, Courts, and Agencies Benefit from Educating Immigrant Workers

MFY also educates workers about what the law does not require. Immigrant workers, who may be familiar with different legal regimes in their home countries, gain an understanding of the legal framework in the U.S. that helps them participate appropriately in New York's workforce. For example, some countries may require an employer to have "just cause" to dismiss a worker, very different from the "employment at will" rule here in New York. We also recognize that many immigrants are small business owners who benefit from learning what is required of them. Education efforts help courts, agencies, and businesses avoid unnecessary disputes and litigation.

Few immigrants have the time for formal coursework on these issues, so MFY conducts brief workshops, informal trainings, and clinics and throughout the city at many neighborhood locations. We speak with hundreds of immigrant workers who are in ESL or job search programs, support programs for domestic violence, or who are referred to our on-site clinics or telephone hotline with questions about their legal rights. We conduct periodic constituent services trainings for elected officials' staff, and trainings for staff at community based organizations.

MFY applauds the Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services of the New York City Council for holding this hearing, and urges the Council to support efforts to educate the immigrant community about their employment rights.

For any questions about this testimony, please feel free to contact Maia Goodell at (212) 417-3749 or mgoodell@mfy.org.

NORTHERN MANHATTAN
IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

Oversight: How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community

PRESENTED BEFORE:
New York City Council
Committees on Immigration, Community Development, and Youth Services

PRESENTED BY:
Jennifer Anzardo-Valdes, Esq.
Senior Immigration Attorney
June 22, 2015

Good Afternoon. My name is Jennifer Anzardo Valdes, and I am the Senior Immigration Attorney at Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation. NMIC was founded in 1979 and has continuously offered quality educational and legal services to Upper Manhattan and Bronx communities. We provide an array of services to low income community members, including social services, legal services, adult education programs, and workforce programs. In the last year alone, NMIC has served hundreds of clients, many of whom are documented and undocumented immigrants.

The immigrant communities we serve are concentrated in the Bronx and particularly Upper Manhattan, which has the 4th largest foreign born population in the city. In the Washington Heights community, 30.4% of students in the public school system are registered as English Language Learners, the highest percentage in all of New York City. Adult education and legal programs are imperative for our community to gain the literacy skills and 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 grants, which have allowed us to create literacy programs that meet the ever growing needs of our communities. Currently, NMIC's Education Department offers ESOL classes, Pre-High School Equivalency, High School Equivalency classes and post-secondary placement into college and/or employment. Through past DACA funding increases, NMIC was able to expand their educational offerings and increase the number of community members we were 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 youth participants in Council funded programs have increased their literacy level by at least one grade.

In addition to academic instructions, DACA funding has allowed participants to receive one-on-one counseling directly with Case Managers. This has increased collaboration between NMIC's Education and Legal Departments as DACA eligible participants are assisted in accessing 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 L.C. and her family present an example of how our clients have benefited from DACA funding. L.C. is a 22 year old mother of three children from Puebla, Mexico. She arrived in the United States at the age of 6 and was unaware that she was possibly eligible 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 adjust your immigration status. L.C. requested an appointment and received a personal screening from a NMIC legal staff member who determined she was eligible to apply for DACA. At the time of filing the application, L.C. was unemployed and struggling to make ends meet for her three children. Thanks to Council supported DACA funding, NMIC was even able to assist L.C. with the application fees. In December 2014, L.C. passed her HSE exam and her DACA application was approved. She now has an employment authorization card and was able to obtain a social security number. She has benefited tremendously from this approval. Through the services she received at NMIC, she is now employed full time, thinking about college and on a surer path to self-sufficiency.

Unfortunately, due to limited funding, not all of our community members have been able to access services, like L.C. This limited access has left us with a current wait-list of over 1,000 students seeking educational services.

We expect this need to increase greatly due to the Executive Administration's plan to expand DACA and its new initiative Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful

Permanent Residents (DAPA). Almost half of the 150,000 people who are estimated to be eligible for DACA and DAPA programs reside in the communities primarily served by NMIC. Although the programs are currently being litigated in court, we have already seen an increase in demand for our services in both our adult education and legal programs since the announcement was made. The availability of seats in our ESOL and HSE programs will be critical to allow students to apply for DACA.

Additionally, even though the DAPA program does not have an educational component for eligibility, the skills learned in adult education programs will be crucial for adults who have now gained lawful employment status to enter into the workforce. With the loss of fundings for these programs, NMIC will not be able to meet the demand in the community.

We applaud the City Council for all their innovative initiatives over the years to serve immigrant communities. New York City was the only city in the nation to roll out a comprehensive program to address the need of DACA recipients by providing funds for education, outreach, and legal services for the immigrant communities. These funds have been critical in connecting immigrants, like L.C., to both literacy and legal services in their communities putting them on a path of self-sufficiency. We strongly urge the Council to continue and increase this funding. The immigrant community has a tremendous amount of talent and skill which will benefit the New York City job market and spur economic growth.

Recommendations:

Based on interaction with clients, experience, and news reports, we have three recommendations:

- First, we agree with the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy, and recommend that the literacy portion of the DACA funding should be expanded to $20 million over the next two years.

- Second, we recommend increased funding for the expansion of free legal services for DACA/DAPA eligible persons. The expansion of these services will provide assistance in negotiating the eligibility process and minimize instances of fraud and abuse against DACA/DAPA eligible individual as reported in the news.
- Third, we recommend the funding for the literacy portion to include funding Case Management services. These services are essential to assist with removal of barriers that prevent smooth integration into employment. Case management focuses on family development, educational opportunity, and employment preparation.

Finally, we believe that expansions of aforementioned services are essential to the successful implementation and seamless transition into the formal economy for most of the individuals who are eligible for DACA/DAPA.

turning point brooklyn

the right turn for a brighter future.

Testimony of Norberto Allende, High School Equivalency (HSE) alumni
New York City Council, Committees on
Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education

June 22, 2015

I'm from Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I am a graduate of Turning Point Education Center's High School Equivalency (HSE) program.

My parents came here from Puerto Rico. I was born here, but in my household we only spoke Spanish. When I was around 5 years old, I only spoke Spanish, and I got made fun of for that.

When I grew up in Sunset Park, it was a really rough neighborhood. It was drug infested, a lot of alcohol abuse, a lot of prostitution, a lot of single mothers doing what they have to do to survive.

When I got into High School, I joined gangs. I hung out with some drug dealers, and started selling drugs. I became part of a gang because I didn't have the family structure that I should have. The family structure we all ask for, or that we all hope for. They made me feel like this is a family, this is how I can make money, this is how I can fit in. So being in a gang and selling drugs, I didn't finish High School. I actually got stabbed. I just stopped going to school. I didn't know where to go, where I was going to end up. I was just working as security or as a bouncer at dead end jobs.

I stepped into Turning Point, and Turning Point really helped me gain my education. They helped teach me how to read, I didn't know how to read as much. I didn't know how to do math that well. I got all the help I needed from them. I got a lot of support from them, like a family. And my High School Equivalency diploma from them.

I actually go to college now, and I want to be a political leader, a community organizer. I'm going to major in political science. I'm in Kingsborough, and hopefully I go to Brooklyn College after, and then hopefully Brooklyn Law School, to help lead the community in Sunset Park.

5220 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11220
Tel: 718-360-8100 | 718-360-8108 ▪ Fax: 347-391-2124 ▪ www.TPBK.org

nyic
NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION

137-139 West 25th Street
12th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 627-2227
www.thenyic.org

New York City Council Hearing on Adult Literacy
Testimony from The New York Immigration Coalition
June 22, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Ariana Rosas and I'm a Special Projects Associate at the New York Immigration Coalition. The New York Immigration Coalition is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization with over 150 members throughout New York State. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the importance of your continued investment in adult literacy.

The City of New York has always been defined and structured by its immigrant population, and in large part, the ongoing socio-economic growth we benefit from is driven by our immigrant communities. Immigrants account for nearly half of our City's workforce, but a significant portion of this population are low-wage earners who rely on unregulated employment in the informal sector - often leading to exploitative 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 they require to better perform in 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 need to pursue and obtain higher education is increasingly seen as necessary in reducing inequality and promoting social mobility, and for many New Yorkers the pathway to postsecondary success has to start with basic education, English language literacy, and High School Equivalency preparation. Obtaining a high school degree alone produces economic and social returns to families, communities and the city as a whole. These direct economic benefits include increased employment, higher salaries that lead to more consumer spending and increased tax revenue. Obtaining a high school degree or its equivalent also reduces social welfare costs and reliance on public benefits.

In fact, for adults that are able to complete high school or earn a HSE, median wages are 25% higher. Helping adults finish their primary education better prepares them to enroll in training programs, pursue college, or advance in their careers. Furthermore, every high school credential earned generates $324,000 in net benefits for the City, through reduced reliance on public programs ($135,000) and increased taxes paid ($190,000) as a result of higher earnings. The citywide deficit in accessible, community-based adult literacy services to immigrant New Yorkers became readily apparent following President Obama's 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) announcement, which included an educational requirement that needed to be satisfied before one could apply. A key challenge for DACA enrollment citywide was that many immigrants did not know that enrollment in a municipally funded adult literacy program, such as an ESOL or HSE class, could meet this education requirement. However, following years of cuts to adult literacy programming, there were not enough classroom seats or

services to help the over 16,000 New Yorkers believed to be DACA eligible if they were to enroll in an adult literacy program.

To address this need, the NYC 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 to support the hardest to reach New Yorkers who had yet to apply for DACA. 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 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-aged DACA eligible. These are individuals more likely to be parents, more likely to live in over-crowded housing, more likely to live in absolute poverty, and more likely to have never attended school, who are already in the workforce and need better incentives to reveal their status in order to become DACA-eligible. In these cases, programming that offers contextualized learning and allows students to draw meaning based on their own lived experiences, basic English language studies, and occupation and development trainings are necessary to improve the livelihood of our working poor communities.

Over the last two years, this Initiative has served over 10,000 New Yorkers who have accessed outreach, legal, and literacy services. However, despite this success, the current FY 2016 budget includes a cut of $2.8 million to DYCD, and $1.95 million to CUNY, and shifts the program administration to HRA and MOIA. Such a cut will result in approximately 4,100 immigrants and adult students losing access to their English Language and High School Equivalency courses.
Such a cut comes at an acutely inopportune time with President Obama's November executive actions set to take effect once a court injunction is lifted. Over 160,000 New Yorkers are expected to benefit from Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents and it is estimated that at least 20,000 additional New Yorkers will now qualify for DACA as the program has been expanded. This is in addition to the 80,000 New Yorkers that qualified under the "original" DACA program and have not yet applied, and the further 30,000 that will need to renew their DACA status this year.

The current, 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 an adult literacy class that would offer the skills to earn a better job and encourage participating in DAPA in order to enter the formal workforce.

Further, given how underfunded the adult education realm is, and with foresight that in the next round of negotiations on a comprehensive immigration solution, we may only see a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers. With this in mind, it is to our advantage to do everything possible to move as many people along the adult educational pathway towards two-year degrees (which, per historical introductions of the DREAM Act would be a basic requisite to qualification). At present, only about 5% of those with DACA would qualify for the DREAM Act. More should and can be done, to help this population gain the qualifications to be able to take advantage of any future reforms that might be based upon educational attainment.

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 their community and local economy, but this requires the City Council's committed investment in the future of its residents. If the City and its administration are serious about bringing 800,000 out of poverty, this is where it starts.

6-21-15

Prof. Robert Courtney Smith, Baruch College School of Public Affairs, and Sociology Department, Graduate Center, CUNY. Lead and Research Director, Mexican Initiative on Deferred Action, a collaborative project promoting Deferred Action applications. robert.smith@baruch.cuny.edu

The Urgent Need for Adult Education in DACA applications.

I write to urge the City Council to offer generous financial support for Adult Education for DACA applicants, and for systems to allocate those spots, in the coming fiscal year. I am the Lead and Research Director of the Mexican Initiative on Deferred Action, a collaborative project promoting Deferred Action applications (the Initiative includes CUNY, the Mexican Consulate General of New York, the New York Immigration Coalition, Make the Road NY, Masa, and ten other CBOs serving Mexicans, with support from the Mexican Consulate). This Initiative combines direct service from established immigrant serving organizations with evaluation and academic research. The analysis below draws on Census data estimates prepared by Prof. James Bachmeier for the NYIC and DYCD Working Group on DACA; on research I have directed through this Initiative with immigrants who attended outreach events in 2014, and then were interviewed to see their outcomes in 2015; and other social science research, including my own. This statement presents my analysis, and does not imply endorsement by any Initiative partners or supporters.

The data indicate: 1) there is an urgent need for Adult Education services to be more widely available, especially among high need populations; 2) there is need for coordination between DACA providers and Adult Education providers to match the need for Adult Education with providers; 3) there exists the understanding and potential capacity to do this work; and 4) These youth are New Yorkers and deserve our help. We need to hurry because DACA is a smart long term investment (the rewards of current action are very high, while the deleterious future effects of inaction are similarly high). The need for DACA is especially high among Mexicans, and to a lesser extent Dominicans and Central Americans, in New York. There are many – myself included – who would be glad to work on this.

1 URGENT NEED FOR ADULT EDUCATION, especially among the Mexican population.

The need for Adult Education for DACA applicants is clear in Census data and in our study of people who received DACA outreach in 2014. The Census data shows that some 23% of all those who have the requisite time and ages to apply for DACA need to enroll in an adult education program to qualify. This is 16,240 people out of 70,245. Mexicans have the highest percentages here -- 43% of Mexicans who have the requisite time and age to qualify for DACA need more Adult Education to be able to apply. This is 6,913 out of 15,469 people in New York City. The next highest groups are Dominicans, with 18%, and Central Americans, with 13%.

The Initiative's survey research strongly backs up these demographic estimates. In a survey of 106 people (mainly Mexicans) who had been outreached in 2014, only 18% had actually applied for DACA when we contacted them in 2015. Of those that applied, 68% had been approved when we

contacted them, 26% had applications pending, and only 5% had been denied. Nationally, the approval rate for Mexican applicants in 87%..

The reasons for not applying varied. ***The single biggest factor was the need for Adult Education -- 42% of those outreached would require Adult Education to qualify for DACA*** (almost exactly the same as the 43% demographic estimate). Moreover, 31% did not qualify by age. Some 13% were still in school or had gotten a GED, and hence would qualify. Some 40% reported that the lack of legal assistance had been a factor in their not applying. Moreover, some 29% of respondents reported that they did not understand DACA sufficiently to apply, and 23% reported factors we categorized as "life logistics" (e.g. work schedules or parenting responsibilities made it hard to get documents together, or attend Adult Education classes, etc) that prevented them from applying. 25% reported needing help getting the necessary documents together to be able to apply.

Significantly, most of those who do not qualify by time or by educational requirements for the original DACA program would qualify under the expanded, 2014, DACA –70% -- or under DAPA – 63%.

2) Need for a System to Allocate Adult Education Among DACA Providers.

There is a critical need for a system or systems to allocate Adult Education seats among DACA service providers. Even with New York City Council's investment in Adult Education classroom seats in 2013, over the course of the last year, DACA service providers have reported that there continues to be a critical shortage of Adult Education seats. The typical scenario is that the organization will do a screening, determine that the person is eligible for DACA if they are enrolled in Adult Education, and either call directly to or make a referral to another organization that offers Adult Education. However, too often, the organization staff or potential DACA applicants are told there are no open slots in Adult Education. Too often, potential DACA applicants are unable to apply because there are no Adult Education classes, or they are only offered far away from where they live or only during the day when the potential applicant is working these are factors which certainly show up in "life logistics" answer above. It is worth repeating the statistic that an estimated 16,240 people could get DACA if they were enrolled in Adult Education..

3) DACA service providers have already developed or can develop effective outreach models.

There is a wealth of experience in handling DACA applications now among New York's nonprofit and public sector DACA promoters. All have learned from prior experience working DACA applicants which obstacles DACA applicants and service providers encountered. It is now possible to draw on these lessons to formulate better outreach models, as many DACA serving organizations have done. The NYIC's Key to the City events, Masa's community center model, and Make the Road's model are good examples. The Mexican Initiative for Deferred Action was designed by its partner organizations explicitly to overcome the obstacles to prior DACA applications and to increase the conversation rate from outreach to completed application.

However, that strategy was premised on the availability of the same level of Adult Education as before, or an expansion. If there is a huge cut in Adult Education funding, it will make bigger the backlog of DACA applicants who we cannot refer to Adult Education. We have identified many such

applicants from prior and on-going outreach, but have already had, and are still having, a hard time placing them in Adult Education.

4) We Must Hurry –The City's support for DACA is a smart long term investment.

Supporting DACA via Adult Education is a cheap, smart, long term investment; failure to support DACA represents a missed opportunity that will be very costly in the long run. Social scientists have documented how the lack of legal status among parents harms the long term developmental prospects of children[1], e.g. by making parents averse to seeking institutional supports. It harms undocumented children and youth by decreasing their incentives to work hard in school because they know they will end up in bad jobs no matter their educational achievement, due to their status., thus decreasing lifetime income. Long term undocumented status also increases stress and chronic disease. It can also distort the meaning of ethnicity and national origin, linking them to "illegal" status in people's minds. Many undocumented youth move from childhood to adolescence to early adulthood to parenthood without legal status or the hope of getting it. This de facto "lifecourse exclusion" is bad for American society and American democracy, and bad for our City. Conversely, DACA recipients report decreased levels of anxiety and increased motivation; a majority have also been able to get a drivers license, and get a new, better, job. While in the long term a permanent solution is needed, DACA helps those who receive it, and improves the communities in which they live.

Investing City Council funding in Adult Education to support DACA applications now is a smart investment, because legal status makes it possible for parents to earn more for their work, and to offer more opportunities to their children. DACA re-establishes the link between hard work in school and later outcomes, because it enables recipients to work legally.

Demographic estimates show that most actual or potential DACA applicants are long term New Yorkers. Many have lived most of their lives in New York or the US. The data show that 68% of the over 70,000 potential DACA applicants had lived for 10 or more years in the US, and that 38% had lived in New York for more than 15 years of their young lives in New York. Moreover, 24% spoke *only* English, while 90% spoke English, well, very well, or only. These statistics do not describe recent arrivals, but rather long term, English speaking youth, who want to stay in the place in which they have grown up and known as home.

One final note. I am sure I speak for many here in saying that investing in Adult Education to support DACA applications is the right thing to do. These youth and their parents have done the same thing New Yorkers have done for generations -- striven to give their children better opportunities. These young people seeking Adult Education to be able to apply for DACA live in the same City we do, their kids go to school with our kids, they ride the same subway and play in the same parks as we do. They are New Yorkers. We should do all we can to help them.

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[1] I draw on research by Hiro Yoshikawa, Roberto Gonzales, Leisy Abrego, Cecilia Menjivar, Pierette Sondagneu-Sotelo, Stephen Ruszcyzk and others, as well as my own work.

The City University of New York

Leslee Oppenheim, Ph.D.
Director of Language and Literacy Programs
205 East 42nd Street, 9th FL, New York, NY 10017
Phone: 646-664-8012 Fax: 646-664-2957
Email: leslee.oppenheim@cuny.edu

Testimony of Leslee Oppenheim
City University of New York Director of Language and Literacy Programs
Before The Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services of the New York City Council: *"How Is New York City Educating Its Adult Immigrant Community?"*

Monday, June 22, 2015

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. Leslee Oppenheim, the City University Director of Language and Literacy Programs, who is out of the country. I am Gilberto Gerena, 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 five boroughs of the City. For more than 30 years, this program has provided a 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 immigrated 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 exist 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 slog through 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 adult English language learners through their ESL and high school equivalency programs. These programs, free to students, are always funded on a shoestring, with the necessity of turning away thousands of applicants from already overcrowded classrooms. Such NY 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 are beginning to feel confident in their use of the language, in their capacity to advocate for themselves, or in their ability to answer questions on the high school equivalency exam, their chances to continue their studies will be taken from them.

New York City leadership must provide greater educational opportunities to enable its adult immigrants get a foothold, enter the labor force and move up economically, and impact the education and well-being 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 the close to 2 million immigrants who speak less than adequate English is required. It is an investment in the future of the 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 ESL services. I am joining with others here today to urge you to reinstate CUNY's DACA funding for educational services, and to commit added resources to the overall funding 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 your 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.

FOR THE RECORD

New York City Council
Committees on Immigration, Community Development,
Youth Services and Higher Education
June 22, 2015

Testimony of Sarah Fajardo
Policy Coordinator, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

My name is Sarah Fajardo, and I am a Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). We would like to thank Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugene, Barron and members of the City Council for holding this important public hearing on literacy programming for New Yorkers.

Since 1986, CACF is the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy organization, and works to improve the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American (APA) children and families in New York City in three key policy areas: education, health and child welfare. CACF challenges the stereotype of Asian Pacific Americans as a "model minority" and advocates on behalf of underserved families in our community, especially immigrants struggling with poverty and limited English skills. We work with our membership of over 45 community based organizations to promote better policies, funding, and services for East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander children, youth, and families.

CACF is a member of New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), a coalition of teachers, providers, advocates, students, and allies from community-based organizations, CUNY, and the libraries across New York City. CACF's member organizations provide programs and a range of services to adult learners, including ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language), ABE (Adult Basic Education), and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation.

These services and programs are crucial for the Asian Pacific American community, as our community members l with the highest rates of linguistic isolation in New York City:

- **APAs have the highest rate (42.5%) of linguistic isolation of any group in the city, meaning that no one over the age of 14 in a household speaks English well.**
- **72.9% of APAs are foreign-born, and nearly half of all working-age Asian immigrants in New York City are Limited English Proficient.**
- **75% of the APA senior population is linguistically isolated.**

CACF supports NYCCAL's recommendations to:

- Restore $4.75 million for the 4,100 DACA seats cut from DYCD and CUNY and to avoid a disruption of services for those currently in programs.
- A $5 million investment to renew and expand the Adult Literacy Initiative to help approximately 4,000 more New Yorkers gain essential literacy essential for career training and employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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150 Court Street, 3rd Fl
Brooklyn NY 11201
T: 718 643 8000
F: 718 797 0410

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T: 718 937 8000
F: 347 808 8778

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350 Jay Street, 15th Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201
T: 718 250 5035

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New York City Council
Oversight Hearing: How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community
June 22, 2015

Testimony of Irfan Ahmed
Adult Education Development Assistant, Arab-American Family Support Center

My name is Irfan Ahmed, and I am the Adult Education Development Assistant of the Arab-American Family Support Center. I would like to thank Immigration Committee Chair Carlos Menchaca, the Community Development Chair Maria Del Carmen Arroyo, and the Committee on Higher Education Chair Inez D. Barron, and the Committee of Youth Services Chair Mathieu Eugene, and all the Council members present here today for holding this important oversight hearing on the question of how is New York City educating its adult immigrant community.

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization created in 1994 to provide culturally and linguistically competent social services to the frequently marginalized and underserved Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities of New York City. Our mission is to empower new immigrants with the tools they need to successfully acclimate to the world around them and become active participants in their communities.

AAFSC has established itself as the oldest and largest social service agency providing culturally-specific services tailored to members of AMEMSA communities across the city over the past decade. We promote equity for underserved populations while also helping them to address the many complex challenges they face related to language barriers, limited education or resources, and the emotional and cultural difficulties associated with migration and resettlement in an unfamiliar new country. AAFSC is a member of United Neighborhood Houses of New York, a collective of 38 settlement house organizations that promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live.

As part of our effort to enhance our services to meet the needs of the communities we serve, our entire organization underwent trauma-informed training, and had incorporated that into the cultural competency training we provide to both new hires and volunteers. We serve over 6,000 low-income people each year through seven major programs: the Youth Program, Preventive Services Program, Adult Education & Literacy Program, Health Program, Legal Services Program, Disaster Relief Program and Anti-Violence Program.

AAFSC is headquartered in Brooklyn, the borough with the highest population of Arab immigrants in New York City. In response to the growing demand for our services, AAFSC collaborated with the Administration for Children Services and opened a second office in Long Island City/Astoria Queens in the fall of 2012.

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F: 718 797 0410

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T: 718 250 5035

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ARAB, MIDDLE EASTERN, MUSLIM and SOUTH ASIAN DEMOGRAPHICS and ADULT LITERACY NEEDS

During the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the Arab immigrant population of New York City, AAFSC's main client base. According to the NYC Department of City Planning, the number of Arab immigrants increased by one-third between 2007 and 2011, making it one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the city. Additionally, New York City has the largest population of South Asian immigrants in the country, with the second highest concentration residing in Brooklyn. According to the CHHAYA Community Development Corporation, between the years 1990 and 2010, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian populations in the city grew by 973%, 210%, and 103%, respectively. Last but not least, the Office of English Language Learners 2013-2014 Demographic Report indicated that among the top five languages spoken in New York City, Bengali and Arabic are listed in 3rd and 4th place, after Spanish and Chinese, respectively.

AMEMSA immigrants have mostly settled in Brooklyn and Queens, two of the largest boroughs of foreign born immigrants. According to the Newest New Yorkers Report of 2013, the second largest immigrant neighborhood in New York is Bensonhurst, with Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Sunset Park—all areas that contain high AMEMSA settlements—rounding out the top ten. Due to Bensonhurst's proximity to Bay Ridge, which also has one of the largest Arab populations in New York City, the neighborhood has witnessed its own burgeoning AMEMSA community, with Pakistanis and Albanians being the two out of the ten largest immigrant groups residing there, and Arab settlements growing to make it the third largest Arab immigrant neighborhood in New York City after Bay Ridge and Homecrest. The next three largest Arab settlements are located in Steinway, Astoria, and Ridgewood.

From AAFSC's informed insight and extensive experience in working with AMEMSA populations who come to our Center from around the City, we have found that English language services are highly demanded and are crucial for the socioeconomic advancement of our clients. Many of our clients and their families have had their lives upended for various reasons. Whether it is the civil war in Syria, turmoil in Egypt, volatility in Yemen, the ongoing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, or the spillover of hostilities into Pakistan, these conflicts have adversely affected many within the communities that we serve. We recognize that these traumatic events have made it difficult for many of our clients to adjust to normalcy and acquire stability while residing in New York City.

These traumatic effects can play a major role in a family's ability to climb up the economic ladder and become self-sufficient. Of major concern are the children in many of these families. According to the "2013 Demographic Report" by the Office of English Language Learners, District 20, which comprises neighborhoods of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, and Bensonhurst, was considered the third largest region where English Language Learners resided. Not surprisingly, when the U.S. Census Bureau surveyed households to determine which areas were linguistically isolated for children, meaning that they were not in contact with an English speaker over the age of 14 who

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spoke English "very well," such as their parents, the top ranked neighborhoods were Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, Elmhurst, Coney Island, Jackson Heights, and Sunset Park—areas also known to have large and nascent AMEMSA settlements.

AAFSC's Adult Education and Literacy program offers classes that are designed to provide a thriving learning environment for empowerment, social interaction and self-discovery, with each student attaining feelings of autonomy and self-efficacy. Our Center offers English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) levels 1 and 2, Basic English in the Native Language (BENL), and a Civics ESL class. AAFSC recognizes that our Civics ESL class must counteract the fear and negative experiences our students have endured. We work with them in transforming their knowledge into an assimilation tool, which enables them to be active members in their newly adopted home and community, as well as an emancipation tool, which permits them to control their lives, challenge in justice and become autonomous, participating citizens in a democracy.

Since 1995, our Adult Education and Literacy program over the years has attracted a significant, yet underserved population, which have found our services to be not only culturally competent and enriching, but also relevant to their lives and aspirations: recently arrived immigrant women from the Muslim world. Because we understand that holding only co-ed classes could restrict other students, we created women-only BENL and Civics ESL classes, which are taught by compassionate and empathetic volunteer female instructors. These classes are regularly filled with AMEMSA women, who would otherwise be discouraged from attending if the environment and atmosphere wasn't suitable to their personal needs.

One of our BENL students, named "Salwa," stood as one of the most poignant examples on what English means to a recently arrived immigrant woman and mother. Salwa is a Sudanese woman who emigrated from Egypt to the United States to reunite with her husband and son after ten years apart. She arrived at JFK International Airport with her belongings and a note that her husband sent her: it was their address in New York. While in New York, Salwa carried that note in her purse as she traveled throughout the City. She was ashamed she didn't know any English and couldn't travel without it, but her husband had informed her about the English literacy classes offered at AAFSC and she was delighted to attend. As a student at the Center, Salwa was very shy, but she progressed rapidly and connected deeply with her fellow peers. Her instructor saw her confidence grow as her facility with the English language improved. The greatest outcome of Salwa's story was when she was able to successfully apply and acquire a job at a local clothing store at the Fulton Mall in downtown Brooklyn--a feat she never thought she could achieve when she first arrived. Salwa is still an active member at our center and her son currently attends our youth program.

KEY ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Adult Education and Literacy program is heavily reliant on the General Support funds we've managed to raise, but it is a source that is quickly depleting. Our students have even recognized our funding circumstances and have offered, at times, their own small and hard earned donations in an

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effort to ensure that we continue to provide this much needed service. Thanks to our dedicated staff, community partners, and volunteers, we have been able to continue to serve our clients—despite these difficult financial challenges. We ask that members of City Council consider the following recommendations offered by NYCCAL members:

1) Restoration of Adult Literacy Seats Cut from DYCD and CUNY

- **Issue:** Two years ago, the NYC Council created an $18 million, 2-year DACA program to support the 16,000 young adults in New York City who needed access to an adult literacy program and legal assistance in order to qualify for federal DACA relief. Since the creation of the initiative, over 10,000 City residents have accessed adult education and legal services from CUNY and 30 CBOs. Despite the success of this program, the FY16 budget cuts DYCD ($2.8m) & CUNY ($1.95m) funding for the initiative, and shifts the program to HRA/MOIA. As a result, over 4,100 immigrants and adult learners will lose their ESOL/HSE class.

- **Recommendation:** AAFSC recommends the full **restoration of Adult Literacy Seats Cut from DYCD and CUNY $4.75m for 4,100.** New Yorkers of all backgrounds need English literacy skills to move from the informal to formal economy, communicate with the children's teachers, interact with medical professionals and police, and otherwise thrive in our City. The loss of these literacy seats will be a tremendous blow to thousands of hard working New Yorkers and their families.

2) Renew and Expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative

- **Issue:** Education level is the single largest determinant of employability and earning power and yet 1.7 million New Yorkers aged 16-65+ lack English proficiency or a HS diploma. A significant part of the City's career pathways strategy is the use of "bridge programs" that help people to transition from low skill levels to marketable credentials and links to the workforce. However, most bridge programs require at least a 9th grade reading level, and many individuals need time, support, and investment to even get to that literacy level – essentially a "bridge to the bridge."

- **Recommendation:** AAFSC calls upon City Council to **invest $5M to renew and expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative.** Investments in basic education and English literacy programs will provide access for the lowest-literacy New Yorkers and those without a high school credential to the Career Pathways model. This initiative will support approximately 4,000 more New Yorkers gain essential literacy and numeracy skills to access career ladder training and employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Arab-American Family Support Center is hopeful to see this funding included in the final adopted budget to ensure that our City's immigrants and adult learners will be supported in their goals and, at the same time, help the Mayor and Council reach its goals of creating a more inclusive, socially cohesive City.

Testimony of Lawrence Fish, Director of Adult literacy, Shorefront YM-YWHA
Re: Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education
June 22, 2015

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lawrence Fish, Director of Adult Educational, Vocational, and Citizenship Services at the Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach Inc. (the Shorefront Y) I am testifying on behalf of our Adult Literacy Program.

At the Shorefront Y we have a large adult education program in Brooklyn, providing classes and related services to over 1000 unduplicated adults yearly with limited English Proficiency through programs including ESL (ESOL, English as a Second Language, ABE Adult Basic Education, and English Language Civics We are funded by DYCD, NY State Education Department through federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Initiative (WIOA) dollars, and we also receive the Department of Homeland Security USCIS funding for citizenship classes.

Our literacy programs run at full capacity and have long ongoing waiting lists for classes of at least 400 students seeking literacy program services at any given time, without regular outreach. There is clearly a tremendous need for literacy services in our area and throughout NYC. The loss to NYC, through cuts in the executive budget for adult education is immediately damaging and a long term disaster for our communities, where, as already stated, more than 1 in 5 adults over the age of 18 in New Yorkers, 1.7 million, have Limited English Proficiency or lack a High School education or both.

Especially hard hit by these cuts is specifically the $ 2.8 million cut in funding to DYCD and the elimination of the DYCD Young Immigrant Literacy Program literacy (informally DACA), administered by DYCD (and the transfer and continuation of only a small portion of this funding level to HRA and MOIA). This results in the burden of the cuts hitting the populations 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 secondary training and education, will be less able to effectively negotiate health care systems and practice preventive health or make healthy life choices, will be less able to earn a living wage, less able to find meaningful regular employment and develop careers and certainly less likely to pay income taxes in NYC. Additionally, it is well documented that the children of the poorest, the undocumented, and of parents who don't speak English at home will struggle and perform more poorly in school and lead to the perpetuation of this cycle of poor literacy, poverty, suffering and an increased burden on our city. These young immigrant adults will be harder to identify and include in the census, put more burden on our police departments, social services, entitlement systems, hospital emergency health care, and almost every other aspect of community and quality of life in NYC.

I hope others today will go more into the research and documentation and exact numbers. I know from my program at the Shorefront Y in Brooklyn, that over 100 hundred young immigrant adults with Limited English Proficiency will be negatively impacted immediately as a result of

these literacy cuts. As someone on the front lines of adult literacy programming in NYC for over 20 years, I see the real life benefits of our adult literacy programs and also the real life consequences for those who do not succeed in learning English as a second language or improving their ability to read, write, communicate, and use everyday math and/or complete a high school equivalency.

Today is an auspicious day for many of our DACA/Young immigrant students, including for our DACA class student Anastasiya Tomylovych, who was hoping to give testimony last Friday, but is unable to attend toady. She is starting college classes at Kingsborough Community College today June 22nd. She attended our 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 and our city as a direct and immediate result of DACA funding.

I want to tell you about another student, Iliana, who was one of those who came out of the shadows and obtained DACA status with our help and the help of the Brooklyn Defenders Services (BDS) as part of this DACA funding. Iliana, is an immigrant who easily speaks English, Unfortunately, she struggled miserably in school and dropped out of high school. We see that Iliana writes poorly and is terrible at math. She is hoping to get an HSE someday. But, for this year, she attended our ABE class and additional volunteer tutoring in basic math. Iliana says she gets up every day and works on her math before going to work. She has spent the year learning the times tables and getting better at working with addition and subtraction of negative and positive numbers. Watching how hard she tries and how diligent and how persistant Iliana is despite her slow progress and frustration, I suspect she has an undiagnosed learning disability and realize she may never achieve an HSE. Also, as I am led to understand, it will be very expensive to diagnose any specific disability or that there are very limited services for this kind of situation. However, she has obtained a job at and ethnic bakery making doughnuts and related baked goods. In the fall, she was suspended and almost lost her job, burning trays of product and miscalculating ingredients; now that no longer happens. She is studying and working and has legal employment status, albeit somewhat insecure.

These are the kinds of students that make up our DACA and similar literacy programs. They are lovely people, important constants of our city, and now they are making significant gains in their lives and for our city in ways that no simple test or rigorous documentation requirements capture. I see them every day, and we all can feel them and the visceral, pragmatic, and monetary reality their struggles impact our city. Also, I think we all understand the way our city can grow and prosper for all our residents through improved literacy.

The complexity of life for young immigrants (et. al.), growing up and living in NYC often makes these clients and students wary of giving accurate information about themselves and their families. However, you can see them fill the class and make improvements in their language and their family situations. While our federal flow through WIOA literacy funding will continue, it is directed toward those documented and is expected to show mandated outcomes aligned with reported DOL statistics, as through the Brooklyn Workforce Centers serving documented clients. The options for the undocumented immigrants and most significantly the young adults living without legal status in NY are increasingly reduced.

Please consider restoring the cuts to the Young Immigrant Literacy programs and place the administration of these dollars under DYCD, experienced in overseeing programs that serve both the documented and the undocumented in NYC. Also, I support the other funding priorities of New York City Coalition of Adult Literacy, including the restoration of the literacy cuts to CUNY. I know the city council has many members, as Councilman Menchaca, who grew up in immigrant families and full well know the challenge for those with limited English and literacy skills. I hope the Council Members can see both the short and long term necessity of making adult literacy a priority in NYC and can vote to restore, reverse, and increase funding for adult literacy programs now and in the future.

Seeking a strong and equitable city and future for all our residents, I thank you once again for the opportunity to speak today for myself and on behalf of the many thousands of adult literacy students in NYC.

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F: 718-292-3169

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Testimony of Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education.

Good afternoon and thank you Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugen, Barron and members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Leah Hebert and I am the Interim Chief Program Officer at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT), a workforce development and immigrant services organization and a member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy.

Since 2001, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow has provided immigrant communities in Sunset Park, Bushwick and East Williamsburg with services including English classes for speakers of other languages, immigration services and job training classes. Currently, we enroll over 800 people each year in our Adult Education and Literacy programs and serve over 4,500 youth and adults annually across all six of our sites. With the DACA funding for adult literacy being cut by $2.8 million, we are set to lose approximately 100 seats in our ESOL classes.

The loss of these seats will have a devastating impact on our immigrant communities throughout the City, and for OBT, we will see this loss first hand in the Bushwick, East Williamsburg and Sunset Park communities that we serve.

These 100 seats represent more than just English classes. These classes are often an entryway to a whole host of community resources and services, as well as a safe space where they can meet other people in their communities and socialize. Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow is often the first point of contact for recent immigrants in the Sunset Park, Bushwick and East Williamsburg communities and we provide an important resource to them as they integrate linguistically and economically into US society.

When they enroll in English classes at one of our locations, they often take advantage of the other services we provide including workshops on financial literacy, housing, healthcare via our partnership with United Healthcare, and immigration services. The majority of our ESOL students are also looking for employment and are eager to earn their High School Equivalency Diploma which is often required even for entry-level positions. In addition, many of our adult literacy students take advantage of our job developers for assistance with job placement, job training and basic and advanced computer skills classes. The loss of these ESOL slots will unfortunately mean the loss of connection to other important services.

The cuts to the DACA initiative will also cut a vital point of entry for the immigrant community to DACA and DAPA legal services. OBT was able to serve approximately 100 young adults eligible for DACA during the two-year

period of the initiative. The majority of these individuals were not referred to our program but came to us for ESOL and other social services because we have developed trust within the communities we serve.

Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow is requesting that the City restore the $4.75 million for the 4,100 seats cut from DYCD and CUNY to avoid disruption of services for those currently in programs. Additionally we ask that the City Council invest in career pathways for its immigrant population by increasing the adult literacy initiative to $5 million.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. We hope to see this funding included in the final adopted budget, and look forward to continuing our partnership with the Mayor's Administration and City Council to reach our shared vision of a more just and equal City.

CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY – JUNE 22, 2015
LOUIS P WELZ-COJO FLATBUSH

Good afternoon and thank you Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugene, Barron and members of the City Council, 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 to immigrants and their families.

In 2014, nearly 100 adult immigrants and poor English speakers benefited 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 other adult education contract but that contract is only to provide HSE preparation. As a result our vital Adult Literacy classes will close as of June 30th.

I am here today to tell the Council that the Adult Literacy Initiative is vital to our Brooklyn community and critical to success of the City and its residents. It is a grave error not to increase our investment in adult education. On a national level, President Obama has been pushing the country to adopt comprehensive immigration reform, advocating for young immigrants and families to gain a pathway to citizenship; the DeBlasio 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 communities we serve in Brooklyn are comprised of immigrants. Almost a third does not speak English well or at all. Our students come to class speaking Urdu, Hebrew, Pashto, French, Arabic, Russian, Farsi, Cantonese, Spanish, Hindi and the list goes on. Our community is diverse, but all share a common goal of learning English.

They often 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 as bus boys or carwash employees.

They are unaware or 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. Here are some of their responses:

"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 immigrants access to 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 DeBlasio and our leaders in the City Council are working to fight, and leave these families with little hope to become productive and prosperous community members.

COJO strongly urges you to find a way to invest $5 million to expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative, for COJO and for other community groups who provide these classes throughout the city.

To the Immigration Committee

Testimonial for:

Adult Literacy Initiative

and the

New York City Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (Education) Initiative

BY: Nelson Yu

Director of Adult Education and Immigration
Phone: 718.592.5757 x219
FAX: 718.592. 2933
nyu@qchnyc.org
Queens Community House
108-25 62nd Drive
Forest Hills, NY 11375
Strengthening Neighborhoods. Inspiring Change
QueensCommunityHouse.org

Queens Community House

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you about Queens Community House and the programming we offer.

Queens Community House (QCH) has been providing adult ESL and Literacy classes for 26 years. The majority of students draw from Queens Community Districts 3 and 4. These districts include areas of Corona, Elmhurst, Forest Hills and Jackson Heights. These 4 neighborhoods alone have a foreign-born population of over 50% with Elmhurst having 71% of their population foreign born. Queens definitely lives up to the borough of immigrants title it was given. The vast majority of immigrants from these areas come from countries demonstrating low English proficiency. According to NYC Department of Planning's *Newest New Yorkers,* while 6% of NYC's native-born residents are not proficient in English, over 50% of the city's foreign-born residents lack English proficiency. QCH's student base includes populations with the highest rates of English deficiency (over 50%): Mexicans (82% lacking English proficiency), Ecuadorians (75%), Chinese (74%), Dominicans (70%) and Bangladeshis (58%).

Our program provides intensive English Language instruction, taught by experienced, dedicated, and passionate professionals. Most of who were full time at one point. But due to the cuts to Adult Education, we had 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 this sample are employed, but in low-wage positions. 18% of our student base is between 18 years and 24 years of age. Many students are parents, seeking to better engage in their children's schooling and interested in becoming more involved in their local communities. English is a necessary tool for retaining employment, advancing in work, enrolling in vocational training or educational opportunities leading to sustainable employment, supporting their children's educational achievement, and being engaged citizens.

The demand for English classes will only continue to 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 secure jobs with 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 parents, parents that want desperately to understand and support their child through school. A level of disconnect has developed between parent, child, and school because of this. Immigrant children are in Americanized school systems. Imagine going to a parent-teacher conference and not understanding what the teacher is saying about your

own child? Without the proper education and English competency for these parents, a stressor has developed. Parents are having difficulties helping their child succeed in schools As educators, we all know a parent's involvement is just as important as a teacher's. As parents, we want to be supportive and help our children grow. Based on recent testimonials from our current students, one of the biggest factors to why they take our English classes is for their child.

Queens Community House is about the community. Our students have fully embraced and are welcomed into the QCH family beyond just a registered student. One previous student of ours now works with our housing department at QCH. Students also serve as volunteers to our Adult Ed program to advocate for our programming throughout the Queens Community. Without continued support and funding, the embodiment of community cannot thrive in our diverse community. These English Programs, not only serve to teach English, but helps promote the embodiment of community in this across Queens.

The Queens Community House has programing for everyone and at all ages, from youth programming to senior care. We serve sons, daughters, grandparents, and parents alike. We want to continue to do so. A cut in adult education funding would mean cutting out parents and young adults from the family and community picture. Please continue support and funding for the family and healthier communities.

On behalf on the Queens Community House, I thank you for your time.

June 22, 2015

Honorable City Council Members:

My name is David Haro. I'm a Peruvian immigrant and an American citizen. I work as an ESL teacher and immigration specialist at Queens Community House (QCH), a non-profit organization serving the diverse community of Queens through 25 sites across the most diverse borough in the most diverse city in the world.

Before I worked for QCH, I had my own criminal-justice agency called Defense Advocacy Services (DAS). I was a mitigation and alternative-to-incarceration expert in state and federal courts for fifteen long years. During that time, I also volunteered to teach citizenship classes at QCH, where my former college English tutor and friend, Craig Schofield, was the assistant director of adult education at the time. QCH had no funds to give citizenship classes. Teaching those classes had gotten me through college. Teaching them for free as a volunteer was my way to give back.

Now, I don't want you to take my story the wrong way and say, "see, volunteers are the way to go." Volunteers don't strive to remain volunteers. Some volunteers sacrifice their free time and offer their experience on a limited basis. Some volunteers just came out of college and are seeking to gain teaching experience to begin a career in education.

Volunteers help—in some cases, greatly—but they cannot be the backbone of a stable educational structure. Working for free in New York requires great sacrifice. On top of that, teaching offers its own obstacles. Teaching is not easy, and some volunteers realize sooner than others that they cannot handle the pressure, despite their best intentions.

Notice my progression. I did not become a teacher so I could be a volunteer. I volunteered when I had a stable job and could afford volunteering. I did not leave a stable job to become a volunteer. I mention this because it strikes me that a budget that emphasizes volunteering is misguided. The emphasis should be in the creation of more stable schools and stable, paid teaching positions. That is, in my opinion, the most effective way to grow an expansive, ever-changing volunteer corps that can serve more people in our immigrant communities.

I'm here to remind you that our immigrant population is growing and, along with it, so is our city. The immigrants that hold this city together in myriad

ways need more services, not less. I'm here to ask that the budget you're working on reflect that. Our immigrant community needs more English and citizenship classes, as well as legal immigration services. Providing translators and interpreters is necessary, but it is not necessarily empowering. We need you, our leaders, our representatives in this great legislative body, to implement policies that promote communication, empowerment and progress in a more direct way.

My students strive to convey their needs and contributions directly. They strive to be self-reliant. They strive to contribute as much as possible to the betterment of their own lives, their families' and, yes, the betterment of this city and country where many of them find the opportunities they need to realize their full potential. Immigrants come to New York, the greatest city in the world, to make progress. We need you, our leaders, our representatives in this legislative body, to implement policies that match the drive and potential of the hard-working immigrants you serve.

Our immigrants need more schools, more teachers, more immigration specialists and, yes, volunteers as well, not less. The results will be better jobs, more businesses, better communication between parents and children, more inspiration, more high school and college diplomas. I believe that because I see that. I see young parents wanting to learn English to get better jobs. I see them getting better jobs. I see young and not so young parents wanting to learn English to communicate better with their children and to inspire them to learn with their example. I see students who want to go to college. I tell them my English was not even half as good when I started my first year at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I see them smiling, motivated, saying, "Yes. That means I can do it."

With policies that promote better communication and empowerment, this city will see more progress. With less communication and empowerment, this city will only see the opposite. Leaders of this City Council, in which direction will you lead us? I beg you, on behalf of my fellow-immigrants and colleagues, lead us in the direction of better communication and empowerment. We need progress, not the opposite.

Respectfully,

David Haro

Testimony presented to the New York City Council Committees on Immigration, Higher Education, Community Development and Youth Services
Oversight Hearing: How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community
June 22, 2015

Joselyn Mendoza
HSE and ESOL Student
Make the Road New York

My name is Joselyn Mendoza. I have lived in New York for 16 years. I am from Mexico and I am a transgender woman. I am studying at Make the Road New York to obtain my High School Equivalency Diploma for 1 year now. I am also studying English at the same time.

For me this class is very important because I want to find a better job. In the past, I worked as a dishwasher and I want something better now because as a trans woman, I suffer from discrimination at the work place and I want to go to college to have more opportunities.

In our class and in classes around New York, people have many reasons to obtain the high school equivalency:

- People want to get better jobs.
- People want to go to college or to training programs.
- People want to be able to help their families.
- People want to get better wages.

These classes are very important, especially for the immigrant community including those who are undocumented. Thousands of students are on waiting lists for classes. They want to start studying now. Our communities can't wait any longer.

Make the Road gives resources and opportunities to the immigrant community. For me, it has been like my second home.

Thank you for supporting free classes because I couldn't afford to pay to study. I hope the City will continue supporting free classes like ours. We need the Mayor and City Council to give more funding to these programs. Thank you.

United Neighborhood Houses

70 West 36th Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018
Tel: 212-967-0322 Fax: 212-967-0792
www.unhny.org

Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses before the New York City Council Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education

Honorable Carlos Menchaca, Chair, Committee on Immigration
Honorable Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Chair, Committee on Community Development
Honorable Mathieu Eugene, Chair, Committee on Youth Services
Honorable Inez Barron, Chair, Committee on Higher Education

Oversight Hearing: How is New York City Educating its Adult Immigrant Community?

Submitted by Kevin Douglas, Co-Director of Policy & Advocacy
June 22, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Kevin Douglas and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), New York City's association of settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement begun over 100 years ago, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership includes 38 agencies employing 10,000 people at 525 sites across the five boroughs to provide high quality services and activities to over 500,000 New Yorkers each year.

Typical member agency programs include: pre-kindergarten and afterschool, youth employment and college access, adult education and workforce development, mental health counseling and homelessness prevention, and services for older adults. Essentially, our members provide "one-stop" shopping for all community members—be they children, youth, immigrants, older adults or working families.

Central to the mission of UNH member agencies is the belief that all New Yorkers deserve the opportunity to self-actualize and build the lives they envision for themselves and their families. For New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds, but particularly true for immigrants, the keystone of building that future rests on their ability to access to high-quality, localized education opportunities. As such, our member agencies provide a variety of adult education services including: Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency (HSE) Preparation, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Basic Education in Native Language (BENL), as well as a number of workforce development programs to help individuals gain the credentials and experience necessary to succeed in the job market.

As a member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL), **UNH fully endorses NYCCAL's recommendations** and offers the following highlights of the adult education landscape in New York City.

Adult Education in New York City

- **The need for adult education services in NYC is high**, with over 1.7 million New Yorkers over the age of 18 lacking English proficiency or a High School Diploma. Yet, adult education programs are chronically oversubscribed, with most choosing not to maintain wait lists, and for those that do, the wait is long.
    - In an informal survey of the field last year, NYCCAL found programs received over 80,000 inquiries per year, with over 14,000 individuals put on waitlists.

- **There is a significant return on investment for adult literacy programs**. For every New Yorker that earns a high school diploma or its equivalent, there is a $324,000 net economic benefit to the City in terms of decreased reliance on public benefits and increased tax contributions. In addition, English proficiency promotes better health outcomes, greater parental involvement in their children's education, higher rates of employment and earnings, and better police-community interactions.

- **The City has had a dismal history of investment in community-based adult education** through the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD). In fact, for several years, the City's Adult Literacy RFP contained no actual baselined dollars, and instead relied on nominal—and declining—federal CSBG/CDBG support and anticipation of an annual City Council PEG restoration of $1m.

- **Contributing to this neglect of immigrant learners, has been the lack of executive ownership/commitment to literacy services.** The Mayor's Office of Adult Education (MOAE) was eliminated during the last administration and folded into the Office of Human Capital Development (OHCD), the precursor to this administration's Office of Workforce Development (WKDEV). In addition, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), while an effective advocate for immigrant issues, has not historically prioritized adult literacy services. At the agency level, DYCD's funding has been historically heavily tilted towards youth services, with adult literacy being a secondary or tertiary priority.

- **New federal and local policies do not support literacy services for low-literate New Yorkers and those lacking documentation.** The new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) seriously threatens the ability of New York State to provide literacy services for immigrants at the lowest levels of literacy, or those lacking a social security number. In addition, NYC's new Career Pathways approach does not appear is not geared towards supporting English learners unavailable for employment.

- **Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have been among the most effective providers of literacy services** in New York City, as measured by the State Education Department's Report Card rating system.
    - Key factors contributing to their success include: a neighborhood-based, culturally competent approach, and holistic wrap around supports and services such as child care, job training and case management.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Initiative

- **The City Council's DACA initiative has been highly successful and garnered national attention.** Over the last two years over 10,000 New Yorkers have been served in the DACA program and New York State's overall application rate increased 15 percentage points, from 34% to 49%.

- **Key to the success of the initiative was its grounding in education**—over 75% of the funding (~$13.7m of $18m) was directed to ABE, HSE and ESOL programming, which served as an effective "carrot" for recruiting potentially DACA-eligible New Yorkers.

- **The current Administration's critique of the program is flawed.** In looking back over the last two years, the administration has noted the lack of hard data on the number of individuals with DACA eligibility that were actually served, arguing too many "non- DACA eligible" were served by the funding. This critique misses the following:
  - Much like the success of IDNYC in allowing individuals without a documented status to secure an ID without it serving as a negative marker, the City's DACA literacy program was designed to be broadly open to immigrant New Yorkers that could be potentially eligible, without demanding proof of an undocumented status to enroll in a literacy program.
  - The alternative—to force undocumented individuals to self-identify and enroll in classes specifically branded as for "the undocumented" would be a counterproductive redesign that does not respect the real fear of individuals to make themselves vulnerable in this way.

- **The redesign of DACA lacked transparency, slashes literacy services for thousands of immigrants and leaves program in limbo.**
  - Neither the City's Preliminary nor Executive budgets explicitly address the DACA program slated to expire in just over a week. Details of the redesigned program have yet to be clearly articulated.
  - What has emerged is that the program has shifted from DYCD to MOIA with HRA as an contracting entity for literacy services. While the City's FY15 DACA literacy investment was approximately $6.05m, the FY16 budget slashes approximately $4.75m of this total from CUNY (~$1.95m) and DYCD (~$2.8m) programs, leaving over 4,100 students without classes.
  - Currently contracts expire on June 30th and the City has not presented a plan for how it plans to spend the $1.3m left for literacy. At this point programs may have to lay off teachers and their students will have nowhere to resume their learning

UNH strongly recommends the City Council work with the administration to, at a minimum, restore this $4.75m to CUNY & DYCD to ensure students have a seat in a class in FY16.

(continued)

City Council Adult Literacy Services Initiative

- In an environment of near zero investment in DYCD's adult literacy programs under the last administration, the **City Council's Adult Literacy Services Initiative has been one of the few reliable sources of funding for the City's CBO community**.

- At $1.5m, the initiative was among those baselined during Mayor Bloomberg's final financial plan (along with the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative and the City Council Adult Literacy PEG restoration).

- **In FY15, the council renewed the initiative at $750,000, which UNH greatly appreciated. However, this funding, when distributed across council delegations, resulted in a relatively limited amount of money Council Members could award to programs in their district.**

- In considering the challenges with the City's DACA redesign, new federal policy that will make it more difficult to serve certain immigrants, and the City's new Career Pathways plan that is not sufficiently oriented towards the learners with the lowest-levels of literacy—and thus the greatest need for support—**it is critical that the City Council act to bolster adult literacy investment.**

UNH urges the City Council to fund the Adult Literacy Services Initiative at $5.0m FY16.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this critically important topic. UNH looks forward to working with the City Council and administration to build an adult education system that best supports the ability of New Yorkers to pursue their educational and career goals.

For additional information: Kevin Douglas: kdouglas@unhny.org or 917.484.9321

Agudath Israel of America
Arab American Family Support Center
Bronx Works
Brooklyn Public Library
Catholic Charities
Chinatown Manpower Project
Chinese-American Planning Council
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Community Service Society
Cypress Hills Local Development Corp
The Doe Fund
Edith & Carl Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst
Fifth Avenue Committee
Fortune Society
HANAC
Institute for Immigrant Concerns, Inc.
International Center of CCCS
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House
Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
LaGuardia Community College, Adult Community Learning
Lehman College Adult Learning Center
Literacy Assistance Center
Literacy Partners
Lutheran Family Health Centers Adult and Family Education
Make the Road New York
Neighborhood Family Services Coalition
New York Immigration Coalition
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation
NYC College of Technology Adult Learning Center
New York City Employment & Training Coalition
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Phipps Community Development Corporation
Queens Community House
Riverside Language Program
Shorefront YM-YWHA
Turning Point Brooklyn
UAW Region 9A Education Fund
Union Settlement Association, Inc.
UJA - Federation of New York
United Neighborhood Houses
University Settlement Adult Literacy Program
YMCA of Greater NY

The New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL) is comprised of teachers, managers, students, and allies from community-based organizations, advocacy groups, public libraries, and colleges in the City University of New York. NYCCAL advocates for an adult literacy system that provides quality, comprehensive, and accessible educational services to current students and other adults who require it. NYCCAL believes that being able to read and write, learn English, obtain a High School Equivalency diploma, and enter training and post secondary education are the rights of every New Yorker and the cornerstone to an equitable and just society.

www.nyccaliteracy.org

@NYCCAL

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Testimony of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy (NYCCAL)
Committees on Immigration, Community Development, Youth Services and Higher Education
June 22, 2015

Good afternoon and thank you Chairs Menchaca, Arroyo, Eugene, Barron and members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sandy Myers and I am the Associate Director for Government Relations at UJA-Federation of New York. Today I am testifying on behalf of NYCCAL, the NYC Coalition for Adult Literacy.

NYCCAL is a coalition of teachers, providers, advocates, students, and allies from community-based organizations, CUNY, and the libraries across New York City. Our programs provide a range of services to adult learners, including ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language), ABE (Adult Basic Education), and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation.

NYCCAL is recommending two restorations and investments in the adopted budget. First is a restoration of $4.75 million for 4100 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.

There are 1.7 million New York City residents over the age of 18 who lack English language proficiency, a high school diploma or its equivalent, or both. Programs around the City are facing long waitlists and reach capacity within hours of opening registration for classes. The demand is great, and many programs regularly turn students away without being able to refer them to another program.

The recent New York Times articles about nail salon workers highlighted the abuse and exploitation that many workers with limited English face every day on the job. Limited English proficiency prevents many immigrant workers from understanding their legal rights or communicating with police and healthcare workers. Immigrant parents struggle to communicate with their children about what they are learning in school, and many must continue to rely on public assistance because they cannot obtain gainful employment without support. Median wages are 25% higher for adults who complete high school or earn an equivalency degree. Providing literacy education for adult immigrants results in a long term return to the City as well. Each high school degree generates approximately $324,000 in net

benefits for the city through reduced reliance on benefits and increased tax revenue from higher earnings.

Despite the benefits and the growing need over the last several years, the FY 16 executive budget still includes cuts for adult education.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Initiative

In 2013, the City Council created the NYC DACA initiative, a two-year, $18 million initiative designed to support 16,000 young adults who were in need of an educational program in order to be eligible for the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA allows an individual who meets certain qualifications to stay in the United States and earn work authorization, but they must first meet the educational requirement. Since its launch, 10,000 of the City's most vulnerable immigrants have had access to literacy, legal, and outreach services at over 30 community based locations and CUNY.

The initiative was launched, in part, because New York State's DACA enrollment rate was low – only 34% of eligible immigrants, compared with nearly 50% nationwide. Part of the reason for this was the lack of a coordinated outreach and engagement strategy and plan prior to this program. Service providers funded through DYCD and CUNY work collaboratively with legal service providers and community outreach groups to create a coordinated citywide network. Since the initiative was launched, New York State's DACA application rate increased to 49%.

Despite the success of this program, the FY 16 budget includes a cut of $2.8 million to DYCD, and approximately $1.95 million to CUNY, and shifts the program administration to HRA and MOIA. This cut will result in approximately 4,100 immigrants and adult students losing access to their English Language and High School Equivalency courses. This cut means that current students will lose their seats in two weeks without meeting their goals of passing the HSE or achieving adequate English proficiency. **NYCCAL is recommending a restoration of $4.75 million for the 4,100 seats cut from DYCD and CUNY and to avoid a disruption of services for those currently in programs.**

Additionally, this initiative was structured in a way to best meet the needs of undocumented populations. The initiative successfully used literacy and adult education classes as a low barrier entry point to get individuals into programs without having to reveal their immigration status. Students and programs benefitted by having classes for immigrants regardless of their status and this model didn't require a particular eligibility for entry. We are concerned that a more targeted approach to this population will ultimately make it less likely that they seek out services and thereby undermine the effectiveness of the program.

Adult Literacy Initiative

The City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative is another important source for increased literacy funding for New York's adult immigrant population. This funding will support the City's workforce goals of using bridge programs that help people transition from low skilled positions to marketable credentials and links to the workforce. **NYCCAL is advocating for an additional $5 million investment to renew and expand the initiative that will help approximately 4,000 additional New Yorkers** gain essential literacy essential for career training and employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. NYCCAL is hopeful to see this funding included in the final adopted budget to ensure that our City's immigrants and adult learners will be supported in their goals and at the same time, help the Mayor and Council reach its goal of creating a more just and equal City.

Adult Education

The key to building success in NYC

1.7 million New Yorkers have limited English proficiency and/or lack a High School degree, and the need and demand for instruction far outstrips the availability of classroom seats for adult learners.

Why invest in Adult Education?

Low literacy affects every part of life for New Yorkers in need. Investments in Adult Education improve the well-being of our families, our communities, and our economy.

Health

Low literacy adults can't read drug labels, their prescriptions, or their children's medical records. Recent research among older adults shows that the better they're able to read, understand and use health and medical information, the happier they are.

Economic Mobility

More than a third of New Yorkers who lack a HS degree live in poverty. Median wages are 25% higher for adults who are able to complete high school or earn a high school equivalency diploma.

School Performance

The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level. Low literacy parents struggle to help with schoolwork or communicate with teachers - involvement that is crucial to students' academic achievement.

Aging

Low literacy and limited English proficiency impact older adults' ability to manage their health, and can make them more vulnerable to consumer fraud.

Adult Education Investments Improve ...

Immigrant Integration

English and civics classes help promote immigrant integration, reducing the long term need for translation and interpretation services.

Community Safety

Limited English proficiency is a barrier to residents' reporting of crime and complaints about labor, housing, and other violations.

Employment

Low literacy adults are twice as likely to be unemployed. Those who are working in low wage jobs need basic education and ESOL classes in order to access job training and workforce development programs that can lead to better employment.

The City Budget

Every high school credential earned generates $324,000 in net benefits for the City, through reduced reliance on public benefits and increased tax revenue from higher earnings.

Despite these benefits, the de Blasio Administration has cut investments in Adult Education for FY2016

The FY16 Executive budget cuts funding for the City's DACA initiative to DYCD ($2.8m) & CUNY ($1.95m).

As a result, 4,100 immigrants and adult learners will lose their ESOL/HSE classes.

What We Need:

Restore $4.75 million for 4,100 seats cut from DYCD and CUNY

Invest $5m to Renew and Expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative

For more info, contact Kevin Douglas kdouglas@unhny.org 917-484-9321 or Sandy Myers, myerss@ujafedny.org 212-836-1658

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sierra Stoneman-Bell

Address:

I represent: Make the Road New York

Address: 92-10 Roosevelt Ave Queens

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joselyn Mendoza

Address:

I represent: Make the Road New York (Student)

Address: 92-10 Roosevelt Ave Queens

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fredy Acosta

Address:

I represent: Adult Literacy

Address: Turning Point

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Anzardo Valdes

Address: 45 Wadsworth Ave NY, NY 10033

I represent: Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp.

Address: 45 Wadsworth Ave, NY, NY 10033

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Hard

Address: 118-25 62nd Dr. 11375

I represent: Queens Community House

Address:

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Norberto Allende and Freddy Acevedo

Address: 423 39th St., Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Adult literacy program at Turning Point Brooklyn

Address: 423 39th St, Brooklyn, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/22/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leah Hebert

Address:

I represent: Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Address:

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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Date: 6/22/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nelson Yu

Address:

I represent: Queens Community House

Address: 108-25 62nd Drive Forest Hills, NY 11355

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date:

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Smith

Address: 302 Walk Hamilton NJ

I represent: I am a Professor @ Baruch College

Address: One Bernard Baruch Way, NYC 10010

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nisha Agarwal

Address: 253 Broadway, 14th Fl. NY, NY 10007

I represent: MOIA

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandy Myers

Address: _____

I represent: UJA-Federation of NY / NYCCAL

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adriana Blancarte-Hayward

Address: Outreach Manager Immigrant Affairs

I represent: The New York Public Library

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
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Date: 6/22/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gilberto Gerena

Address: 300 Jay Street, RM H125, Bklyn, NY 11201

I represent: NYCCT-CUNY (Leslee Oppenheim)

Address: 205 EAST 42 STREET NYC 10017

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6-22-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Douglas

Address: United Neighborhood Houses

I represent: 70 W 36th Street.

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. N/A Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 7/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Irfan Ahmed

Address: 150 Court St. Brooklyn

I represent: Arab American Family Support Cntr.

Address: "

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/22/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAIA GOODELL

Address: 299 Broadway, 4th floor, 10007

I represent: MFY Legal Services

Address: Same

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mariam

Address: 158 Court St. 3rd fl. Brooklyn, NY 11201

I represent: Arab-American Family Support Ctr.

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/22/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stacie Evans

Address: 253 Broadway, 8th Floor

I represent: Mayor's Office of Workforce Development

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margarita Guidos
Address: 7 Hanover Sq, NY, NY 10004
I represent: NYLCG
Address: 7 Hanover Sq NY, NY 10004

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/22/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lawrence Fish
Address: 3300 Coney Island Ave; Brooklyn NY 11235
I represent: fishL@shorefronty.org
Address: 718-646-1444 Ext 365

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Louis Wetz
Address: CoJO Flatbush 1523 Ave M
I represent: CoJO Flatbush
Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/22/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ariana ROSAS

Address:

I represent: New York Immigration Coalition

Address: 137 West 25th St NY NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

Adult Education

The key to building success in NYC

1.7 million New Yorkers have limited English proficiency and/or lack a High School degree, and the need and demand for instruction far outstrips the availability of classroom seats for adult learners.

Why invest in Adult Education?

Low literacy affects every part of life for New Yorkers in need. Investments in Adult Education improve the well-being of our families, our communities, and our economy.

Health

Low literacy adults can't read drug labels, their prescriptions, or their children's medical records. Recent research among older adults shows that the better they're able to read, understand and use health and medical information, the happier they are.

Economic Mobility

More than a third of New Yorkers who lack a HS degree live in poverty. Median wages are 25% higher for adults who are able to complete high school or earn a high school equivalency diploma.

School Performance

The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level. Low literacy parents struggle to help with schoolwork or communicate with teachers - involvement that is crucial to students' academic achievement.

Aging

Low literacy and limited English proficiency impact older adults' ability to manage their health, and can make them more vulnerable to consumer fraud.

Adult Education Investments Improve ...

Immigrant Integration

English and civics classes help promote immigrant integration, reducing the long term need for translation and interpretation services.

Community Safety

Limited English proficiency is a barrier to residents' reporting of crime and complaints about labor, housing, and other violations.

Employment

Low literacy adults are twice as likely to be unemployed. Those who are working in low wage jobs need basic education and ESOL classes in order to access job training and workforce development programs that can lead to better employment.

The City Budget

Every high school credential earned generates $324,000 in net benefits for the City, through reduced reliance on public benefits and increased tax revenue from higher earnings.

Despite these benefits, the de Blasio Administration has cut investments in Adult Education for FY2016

The FY16 Executive budget cuts funding for the City's DACA initiative to DYCD ($2.8m) & CUNY ($1.95m).

As a result, 4,100 immigrants and adult learners will lose their ESOL/HSE classes.

What We Need:

Restore $4.75 million for 4,100 seats cut from DYCD and CUNY

Invest $5m to Renew and Expand the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative

For more info, contact Kevin Douglas kdouglas@unhny.org 917-484-9321 or Sandy Myers, myerss@ujafedny.org 212-836-1658

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sierra Stoneman-Bell

Address:

I represent: Make the Road New York

Address: 92-10 Roosevelt Ave Queens

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joselyn Mendoza

Address:

I represent: Make the Road New York (Student)

Address: 92-10 Roosevelt Ave Queens

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fredy Acosta

Address:

I represent: Adult Literacy

Address: Turning Point

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Date: _____

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Name: David Hard

Address: 118-25 62nd Dr. 11375

I represent: Queens Community House

Address:

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Name: Leah Hebert

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Name: Robert Smith

Address: 302 Walk Hamilton NJ

I represent: I am a Professor @ Baruch College

Address: One Bernard Baruch Way, NYC 10010

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nisha Agarwal

Address: 253 Broadway, 14th Fl. NY, NY 10007

I represent: MOIA

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sandy Myers

Address: _____

I represent: UJA-Federation of NY / NYCCAL

Address: _____

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I represent: MFY Legal Services

Address: Same

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Address:

I represent: New York Immigration Coalition

Address: 137 West 25th St NY NY

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