

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Margaret S. Chin
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria Del Carmen Arroyo
Karen Koslowitz
Deborah L. Rose
Chaim M. Deutsch
Mark Treyger
Paul A. Vallone

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

Caryn Resnick
DFTA Deputy Commissioner

Kim Hernandez
DFTA Assistant Commissioner

Jacqueline Mallon
Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development at
Department of Small Business Services

Michele D'Amato
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Associate State Director for AARP New York

Janice Handler
AARP New York Volunteer

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good morning. I'm Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of the Council's Aging Committee. As New York City's senior population continues to grow, so too are the number of older New Yorkers in the workforce. There are many reasons why older New Yorkers may wish to remain in or re-enter the labor force. Many wish to continue careers from which they receive great purpose and enjoyment or to discover and learn new skills. The average American is retiring later than ever before at age 67 years old. Unfortunately, many who otherwise will retire after putting in years of hard work are forced to seek paid employment because the high cost of living in New York City, along with debts and medical expense make it impossible to retire on social security and limited savings. Seniors bring a number of benefits to the work place, including professionalism born out of years of experience, reliability and flexibility and highly developed skills and knowledge that they can use to mentor and train younger employees. I know this to be true from personal experience, as I currently have two seniors working in my office that have mentored my younger staff and have contributed significantly

to serving my district. A 2014 survey of human resources professionals reported that employees were overwhelmingly receptive to working with and being mentored by older co-workers and that many organizations had increased training efforts to retain older workers by addressing potential skill gaps. Despite the fact that older workers have accumulated greater skills and experience than their younger counterparts, they still face a number of challenges in the labor market. These include the reluctance of some employers to hire or retain older workers due to higher health costs and salary requirements as well as the advantage of younger workers with respect to digital skills. Also, unfortunately, many seniors encounter blatant age discrimination in violation of Federal, State and local laws. We must ensure that those older New Yorkers who continue to work past retirement are afforded the education and training necessary to remain competitive with younger workforce and that they are protected from discrimination in hiring and during their employment. New York City must not only be an age-friendly place to live, but must also be an age-friendly place to work. I want to acknowledge

Council Member Paul Vallone who is the Chair of our Subcommittee on Senior Centers for joining me today, and I'd like to thank our Committee Staff, Eric Burnstein, Committee Counsel, James Zabudi [sp?], Policy Analyst, and Doheni Sapora [sp?], Finance Analyst, and welcome all of you here this morning and I look forward to hearing your testimony. Thank you. We're going to call up our first panel from DFTA, Deputy Commissioner Caryn Resnick and Assistant Commissioner Kim Hernandez. Our Counsel will swear you in.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Committee Counsel

Eric Burnstein, can you raise your right hand please? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

CARYN RESNICK: I do.

KIM HERNANDEZ: I do.

CARYN RESNICK: Good morning, Chairperson Chin and Vallone and members of the Aging Committee. I'm Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs at the New York City Department for the Aging. I'm joined by Kim Hernandez, Assistant

Commissioner for Active Aging at DFTA. And I guess I'm not joined by Jaqueline Malone, but you will hear from her shortly, Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development at the New York City Department of Small Business Services. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today on the topic of older adult employment. I will discuss DFTA'S Senior Community Services Employment Program, known as CSEP, also known as Title Five as well as DFTA's collaboration with SBS. Through CSEP, DFTA has provided older adults for more than 25 years with job training, linkages to employment and opportunities to share their talents and experience with their communities. The work of CSEP remains critically important because older New Yorkers are living longer than ever before, and many turn to DFTA for help to secure a continuing role in the workforce. During the past two decades, older workers nationally have significantly increased their participation in the labor force. Fewer than 30 percent of those 55 and older were working in 1993, but by February 2010 participation had increased to 40 percent. Several factors have contributed to this growth. Among them the reduced frequency of employer-sponsored retirement benefits and the

increase of life expectancy. Nationally, older workers also spend more time searching for jobs than do their younger counterparts. In 2010, unemployed individuals 55 years and older spent an average of 35.5 weeks jobless in comparison to 23.3 weeks for those age 16 to 24 and 30.3 weeks for those aged 25 to 54. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4.9 percent of the labor force age 16 years and older is unemployed as of September 2015. For workers between the ages of 55 to 64, 3.6 percent is unemployed, and for workers age 65 years and older, 4.2 percent is unemployed. Federal funding available under Title Five of the Older Americans Act is the major national resource for workforce development services for older adults. DFTA is one of the largest recipients of Title Five funding in the nation. CSEP is funded by the US Department of Labor and is overseen in part by the National Council on Aging as well as by the New York State Office for the Aging. This program is DFTA's primary initiative to assist older New Yorkers, specifically in need of employment services. DFTA also works closely with a number of community partners that receive Title Five funds from the US Department of Labor to administer

workforce development programs for older New Yorkers.

These organizations include Korean Community

Services, Chinese-American Planning Council, the

Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults, Easter

Seals, the AARP Foundation, Partnership for the

Homeless, and the Urban Leagues of Westchester and

Long Island. Programs supported by Title Five

funding must be age-specific and means tested.

Consequently, DFTA CSEP program serves New Yorker age

55 and older with low to moderate incomes. The

program combines classroom and job training

opportunities with placement services. Participants

receive five days a week of classroom training and

structured 12-week courses. They are trained to

various means, including teacher-led lectures and

workshops, exercises with classmates and interactive

self-paced computer modules. Job readiness

preparation is an essential part of the training

curriculum. Twice weekly workshops are offered to

hone skills for job searching and job retention and

include resume preparation, cover letter writing and

interviewing. High School Equivalency Diploma and

English for speakers of other language classes are

offered as well. Many individuals also benefit from

on the job training. The Federal Government envisioned the CSEP as a vehicle for employment training, but also as a means for seniors to better their communities. Through CSEP, participants offer their talents to community organizations such as senior centers, city agencies and community based nonprofit organizations. In keeping with this aspect of the mission, DFTA's program participants regularly are assigned to one of the more than 400 host sites during their training which represent a range of community placements. Upon completion of classroom and on the job training, DFTA works to place Title Five participants into unsubsidized permanent employment. During FY 2015 we serve 495 individuals, which include 330 women and 165 men. Of those participants, 57 percent were between the ages of 55 and 64. Among FY 15 participants, 40 percent self-identified as black or African-American, 28 percent as white, 26 as Latino, and 18 percent as Asian. In relation to educational attainment, 19 percent of these participants did not receive a high school diploma or GED, 34 percent were high school or GED graduates, and 26 percent were college graduates. The New York City Department of Small Business

Services operates a network of 17 Workforce One centers to train and connect job seekers to employment opportunities and offer business cost saving recruitment services. There are five hub centers, 10 affiliate centers and two sector center, specifically focused on careers in healthcare, transportation and manufacturing. Since the start of the Administration SBS has started shifting away from a system of rapid attachment to provide a Workforce One job seekers with quality jobs with real advancement opportunities. SBS recently announced the higher wage standards for business receiving free recruitment services through our Workforce One centers. Building upon the wage floor instituted last year, the new standard will require businesses recruiting through Workforce One to hire employees fulltime or pay at least 11 dollars and 50 cents per hour for a part-time position. The CSEP program works in close collaboration with the city's Workforce One Centers. DFTA has partnered with SBS to ensure that older New Yorkers receive a seamless array of emergency services regardless of their income. These services include career guidance and counseling, job readiness workshops, job interview

preparation, job opportunity referrals and new employer recruitment initiatives. DFTA resources are also available at all Workforce One Centers. In addition, DFTA regularly participates in Workforce One partner meetings and is updated on weekly general employer recruitments. Both programs, Workforce One and CSEP actively utilize each other's resources and expertise. For example, older workers who visit a Workforce One Center and meet the Title Five eligibility requirements, low to moderate income and age 55 or older are referred to CSEP at DFTA. Similarly, CSEP participants are registered for Workforce One benefits and are able to augment training received through the program with other training opportunities offered by the Workforce One centers. CSEP also refers clients who do not meet the Title Five eligibility requirement to Workforce One. The reserve program also offers older New Yorkers an additional vehicle for sharing their expertise and remaining engaged in the workforce. Nonprofits and public agencies hire retired professionals or reservists to fill key staffing gaps at affordable rates. Reservists work part-time for nonprofits and government agencies on time limited

projects in exchange for a modest hourly stipend.

DFTA, as the manager of the city's contract with

Reserve, oversaw the placement of 188 reservists in

20 different city agencies in FY 15. Despite a

challenging economic climate DFTA works diligently to

place Title Five participants into meaningful

employment upon completion of the program. Top

industries for placement of Title Fives include

healthcare, administrative support, security, retail,

and maintenance. During FY 15, more than 80 percent

of Title Five participants were placed in host

training sites for on the job training experiences.

During the same year among participants exiting the

program, nearly 20 percent were placed into

unsubsidized employment. Of those placed in FY 15,

more than half entered other occupations including

administrative support, clerical assistance, data

entry, security, food service, banking, maintenance,

and education among others. Success of the Title

Five program is not demonstrated simply by job

placement. Employment retention is another important

measurement, and one in which DFTA-sponsored

participants have excelled. About 90 percent of

participants in FY 15 retained their jobs in the two

quarters following their exits from the program.

One training program with particular success in

placement is DFTA's partnership with various

healthcare providers in New York City. For example,

Partners in Care, Cooperative Homecare, Sunnyside

Clinic, and Reliable Community Care which trains

Title Five participants as home health aides. Upon

completion of a three to four week focused training,

20 percent of trainees graduated and obtained jobs in

FY 15. There are a number of security companies who

also provide security guard training for Title Five

participants. Helping mature workers enter or return

to the workforce always has been challenging. Older

workers encounter ageism and many older adults

seeking hope from CSEP face other significant

barriers such as limited work experience, poverty,

disability or language barriers. Considering these

major challenges, DFTA's program achieved significant

success in helping older New Yorkers seeking

employment. Despite these successes, DFTA's program

like most government service programs must weather

today's fiscal challenges. As part of the federal FY

15 budget, funding for CSEP was cut significantly.

Combined with the expiration of federal stimulus

monies, overall funding for DFTA's program has been reduced to approximately three and a half million dollars down from approximately eight million in FY 11. In order to allow more older adults to benefit from the program in the face of these cuts, the US Department of Labor recently has implemented strict enforcement of its 48-month limit on training.

Although the program has been serving fewer clients as a result of the current fiscal constraints, CSEP will continue to help older adults, elder New Yorkers both serve their communities and secure meaningful and sustainable employment. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify today, and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. We're going to start with questions from Council Member Vallone.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners. A lot of good things there. I think we're all excited to hear about how we can always expand and what we can do more. I think our goal is always trying to bring more. And as always, I'm always learning. I think if you could just help me with the parameters of the programs when we say--it

sounds like in most of the testimony and most of the programs here are available for seniors above 55 with low to moderate income. So, can you tell me the parameters of what low to moderate income means?

KIM HERNANDEZ: Absolutely. For the CSEP program for a family of two people its 19,000 dollars. For one person it's 14,000 dollars, and that's based on 125 percent of the poverty level. So, it changes slightly every year.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And up to the moderate income would be--what would be the max until you capped out?

KIM HERNANDEZ: It would be 14,700 dollars.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Has there been any change--

KIM HERNANDEZ: [interposing] For one person.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Has there been any changes on those levels?

KIM HERNANDEZ: It's based on the poverty level, so it's adjusted. It's adjusted by that on the federal level each year, so it has only changed slightly.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I'm trying to make sure that we have programs for all of our seniors and I think that would be our goal as our senior population in 10 years is going to be 50 percent higher than it is today. So, I'm sure many, many of our seniors don't fit that rigid requirement. So, my concerns are how do we go beyond that, and what can we do as a city to make up for the gap? Is DFTA or SBS or anyone else have alternative plans that are beyond Title Five or the poverty level or my seniors?

KIM HERNANDEZ: Well, one of the programs, you know, that we did talk about in our testimony was the reserve program, which is another opportunity for people who are retired professionals to gain access into the workforce for a set period of time, and you know, there isn't an income requirement regarding that program, and it's been running for approximately 10 years. DFTA's had a contract for about seven years for 1.6 million dollars and we share that with different city agencies. Currently we have 188 reservists that are placed in government agencies.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's a good start, but that's a real small number.

KIM HERNANDEZ: It is, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: We need to have some real good--good morning. I saw you came up. So, if you could add to that question.

JACQUELINE MALLON: How are you?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Good.

JACQUELINE MALLON: I'm Jackie Mallon, Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development at the Department of Small Business Services.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Good morning, Jackie.

JACQUELINE MALLON: So, Workforce One, the eligibility requirement is different. It's around 60--it's also indexed at 200 [sic] percent of the poverty level, but it's around I think right now at about 66,000 dollars. So, it offers a much higher level.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: and do we have any statistics or numbers on the amount of seniors that are receiving or participating in these programs based--

JACQUELINE MALLON: Last year, about 20,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And of that
20,000 where do they fit within that economic median?

JACQUELINE MALLON: They're in--I don't
know that off the top of my head. We could get back
to you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I'd like
to see it.

JACQUELINE MALLON: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I'd like to see
how many seniors just miss the curve.

JACQUELINE MALLON: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, I think if
we're going to talk about maybe expanding or
reforming or subsidizing something on the city level
to maybe reach that group. I'd be really curious to
see how many we're not getting to. On both ends,
too.

JACQUELINE MALLON: Yeah, yeah. No, it
makes sense.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I think no matter
where our Chair and I go, we're dealing with seniors,
period. So we're not really looking at anyone any
differently as to where they come from, who they are,
their income levels, what they have in the bank, what

1 they don't have in the bank. It's the same issues
2 facing our seniors, and I'd like to be able to give
3 some of these great programs we're talking about, but
4 I--especially in Queens, in northeast Queens, I don't
5 see any of these. Of the hubs that we were talking
6 about, I think you said there's 15 of the Workforce
7 One--

8 JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing]
9 Seventeen.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: centers. Do we
11 have the locations on those and where they are
12 located?
13

14 JACQUELINE MALLON: Yeah. You want me to--
15 -all of them right now?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well--

17 JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing] I can.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do you have them
19 broken by borough?

20 JACQUELINE MALLON: In Queens, we're in
21 Jamaica.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I mean,
23 just for me, but in general I'd like to know like how
24 many in each borough do we have.
25

JACQUELINE MALLON: There are--I have to count them, right, sorry. Three or four in each borough.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay. Now in Queens.

JACQUELINE MALLON: What's that?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Where are they located in Queens?

JACQUELINE MALLON: We have a hub center in Jamaica, and then there's the Industrial Transportation Center also in Jamaica, because it's the highest concentration of transportation employment. We're also in Long Island City at the Flushing Library. That's it right now, yeah? Long Island City, yeah, I said that. So, that's it for Queens. In the Bronx we're at--

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing]
Have those numbers increased over the years? Like how many Workforce One Centers was there five years ago? How many are there today?

JACQUELINE MALLON: Five years ago there were probably seven, off the top of my head, and then--

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing] So we have doubled?

JACQUELINE MALLON: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That's a good sign.

JACQUELINE MALLON: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And is there any talk of expanding the locations? I mean, there's a lot more areas in Queens besides those four, so.

JACQUELINE MALLON: No, that's true.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: That would be a big help, I think, in bridging the gap of at least providing, or maybe they don't have to be full time, but maybe we can create something in areas from the Rockaways to Northeast Queens, places that can't get to that. It might be a great way to do that.

JACQUELINE MALLON: Thank you for helping me. The other site in our network is in Rockaways, and I cannot I believe I forgot that.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I'm sure Donovan Richards would be happy that I brought that up. So, I want to make sure.

JACQUELINE MALLON: But yeah, we are looking at--the other thing I should note for you if

1
2 it's not apparent, like DFTA we have also a network
3 of community partners where we do onsite work with
4 them. They refer people, and that's about 350,
5 probably 120 of them are actually very active with
6 us. So, we try to get into additional neighborhoods
7 through that network as well.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So those network
9 community partners, what can you tell me about them?

10 JACQUELINE MALLON: They are
11 organizations in different communities who have--who
12 provide a lot of the sort of what people characterize
13 as job readiness training or soft skills or any of
14 those kinds of things that sort of get people ready
15 to come and interview or be assessed for one of the
16 jobs that we're working on, and they're--we have a
17 formal agreement. They are--we share--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing]
19 Where is the funding for those programs? Is that a
20 partnership? Is that DFTA or is that their own
21 private funding?

22 JACQUELINE MALLON: It's their--the
23 community partners are funded independently. To
24 start the program, my recollection from many years
25 ago, is that we started it, I think, with some CEO

money, but that has--was just at initial stages, but it's their own independent funding.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I mean, since we have the three of you there, what--and thinking out of the box. What are some ideas that we could do to reach the seniors that are not part of this data? How else can we serve the rest of our senior population?

JACQUELINE MALLON: IN terms of employment?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, sure, getting them into the workforce, getting them back. I think every one of our seniors would like to work as long as possible.

JACQUELINE MALLON: I'm not sure if we have made all of our offerings in terms like occupational skills trainings and things like that. I'm not sure if we've effectively gotten the word out about those, and so I think we could do a better job there. The degree to which that is specifically going to be relevant to older folks, it's going to vary, but I know for sure overall we're working on doing a better job there, because we have just, you know, since the change in Administration, just really

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I think what Council Member Chin and I have found out time and time again is many of seniors just aren't aware--

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: of a lot of the

benefits that are available to them, and they may fall in that group of the low to moderate, but the area where they live is not traditionally where the city has focused reach, reach-out programs or advertising programs anywhere in the city. So, I think we need to re-evaluate. When we looked at the SNAP program, when we looked at everything we found so many seniors not availing themselves, and I think that's all responsibility to do a better advertising on every level, from senior centers to emails to our seniors who are homebound and can't get that type of information unless we physically get it to them. Whether it's meals on wheels and they include some type of additional information packet, but--and the

1 last point, and then I'll turn it back over to the
2 Chair. I've been mentioning since my time, brief
3 time as a Council Member, but I think it would be a
4 good idea for us to look at a partnership program
5 with businesses that do the right thing, because
6 there are many businesses that don't. So, if you have
7 senior accreditation program, senior friendly program
8 from banks to small businesses that will hire and go
9 beyond the curve, will provide additional services,
10 will help get transportation at their site, will
11 provide a bench outside, will allow them to rest
12 waiting to cross the street, will allow family
13 members to make pick-up spots, I think we can go
14 beyond Federal, State and on a local level we can
15 come up with like a senior, and Morgan and I have
16 been talking about this, creating a symbol,
17 accreditation, something for that business to strive
18 for that DFTA could take a look at and say this
19 business meets the senior-friendly initiatives that
20 we feel in the city should be there for, and
21 therefore we're going to get them this accreditation,
22 and now the neighborhood will know, because that's
23 where I'd like to do my business. Some place that
24 takes step for veterans, for my seniors, for people
25

1
2 in need that will take the extra step and hire
3 someone, volunteer, will have an internship program,
4 all of that I think will now make that business
5 think, "Hey, I have to compete with Bank ABC on the
6 corner that got a senior accreditation and I didn't,
7 and now I'm losing all my senior business and clients
8 and checking accounts and saving accounts to that.
9 What can I do?" Is there any thought of maybe
10 exploring that. I know Caryn, we had talked about
11 those.

12 CARYN RESNICK: As part of Age-friendly
13 NYC which we were--we just receipted that Commission,
14 NYAM [sic] had been working and Ruth Finkelstein
15 actually took this program with her to Columbia
16 School of Public Health, and they give out awards for
17 businesses that do the right thing and employ older
18 workers, and each year that's been growing and they
19 do a big public award, you know, ceremony, and
20 through Age-friendly we are trying to promote
21 businesses that are age-friendly. So, it's an
22 equation. We have job seekers, but then we are
23 working to combat ageism and touting all the benefits
24 of older workers, reliability and coming in on time,
25 and the many reasons we know that older workers make

great employees. So, there's work to do on both ends of that equation. We're having a job fair next week, an--

KIM HERNANDEZ: [interposing] What I'd like to add about the job fair is that one of the challenges, and you're absolutely right in terms of the mature worker, is to reach out. We have job developers in our CSEP program who reach out to new employers and nurture those relationships with employers that have really been great about hiring mature workers and have been very focused on that. One of-- so our job fair is next week, and we have 30 employers who are going to be at that job fair, and we're going to be honoring one in particular, which is the Council, the Council for the Airport Opportunities. So we've nurtured a relationship in the last two years with this organization and we've been able to hire a number of-- they've hired a number of our Title Five workers to do airport security. That is a new area for us, and we've been very successful. Historically we've been successful with our health home aid training programs that we have, and so that's another higher, you know, category as well. And we've just established, just

1 this past year, a relationship with HHC clinics that
2 we have Title Fives that are there who are doing
3 reception work and also providing assistance at those
4 sites. Another thing that we find that's really
5 important about this program is that--and the way
6 that we like to market it is that a lot of times
7 you're in the health--in the hospital situation. You
8 have seniors that are at the hospital, and a lot of
9 times it's so much easier for them to hear from
10 another person, see another person who looks like
11 them who's a senior, and we've also--so that sort of
12 eases the entry into the system and also language
13 capacity. We've done outreach with the ID program,
14 and we have been able to hire a few people through
15 that program because of their language capacity. Our
16 greatest strength ultimately is in customer service
17 for our CSEP program. The office has committed
18 funding to give us a really, a brand new beautiful,
19 which I invite you to, our senior employment training
20 center on the sixth floor at Two Lafayette. We've
21 been there for a year and a half and we've been able
22 to--and we share it with our training office as well.
23 We've been able to really work at recruiting more
24 people, and we have the technology that's up to par
25

1 which is really wonderful for our CSEP people to
2 learn through our computer classes, through our
3 customer service classes, our job readiness, and also
4 our community sites, which we have 400 community
5 sites, mostly DFTA senior centers and other nonprofit
6 organizations, and additionally, and I'll stop--I
7 love this program--is that we have been working with
8 our Public Affairs Office through Caryn around social
9 media. So we have been highlighting success stories
10 on Facebook. Just recently this week we have two
11 stories about senior employment workers who have had
12 a successful entry into the workplace.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I think you
15 could tap into our 51 Council Members, and when we
16 have those stories we have our own engines to get out
17 there with social media and ability to stand with the
18 seniors and the programs at work. I think we have a
19 better partnership in highlighting those and getting
20 the word out, and--

21 CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] We invite
22 that. That would be wonderful.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yeah, I think
24 that would be, but we need to know from you what--
25

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] Well, you can Tweet and re-tweet--

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing] who those folks are--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] and friend us on our Facebook page.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I'll turn it back to our Chair. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. We also been joined by Council Member Deutsch from the committee. I wanted to go back to ask you, Assistant Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner Mallon, when you were talking about 20,000 older worker that come through Workforce One, do they come through their looking for jobs or--in the main, or have--what's the percentage that just come to get, upgrade their skills in terms of training?

JACQUELINE MALLON: I don't know off the top of my head. What I know off the top of my head-- and I would imagine because most people come to us because they're interested in their particular job opportunity, so I'd imagine that it is true for older workers as well, but about 1,500 of the 20,000 are--

in last year-- were connected to employment through us.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: They were connected? They actually found jobs?

JACQUELINE MALLON: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Wow, that's good. I mean, but do you--

JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing] It's a start.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: publicize? Do you publicize the skilled training part? That's the question I have.

JACQUELINE MALLON: We do, but--

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing] Because usually, when we look at Workforce--

JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing] I don't think well enough.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: One we think about, you know, if you're unemployed and you need a job you go there, but if someone like a older is on, you know, has a job but want to upgrade let's say their computer skill, I don't think that that's the place they would go.

JACQUELINE MALLON: I agree with you. You know, we're working on that, and in particular because we have access to so many people and it's a new strategy for us to invest, you know, as much as we're planning to do in training, and so we need to get better at getting the word out, and we are absolutely working on it.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I think that's something that we definitely want to be helpful with, because--

JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing]
Terrific.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: that would really help a lot of the older worker who need to upgrade their skills--

JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: so they could remain competitive. So, I think that's something that we really need to working on. The other question I have is maybe go into a little bit more about the Title Five program. I mean, it looked like it's a job training program, but the funding has been cut tremendously. So, right now your budget is only at 3.5 million versus eight million back in 2011. So,

11 CARYN RESNICK: There's a much greater
12 emphasis, and yes, historically that's true, and now
13 there is much--there's stricter regulations about the
14 length of stay, and we're working much harder to find
15 permanent placements, but that's the other side of
16 the equation I was talking about of fostering those
17 relationships with private employers who will hire
18 older workers.

20 CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] It's a
21 definite stigma that we still haven't overcome.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I mean, because
23 the Title Five program, it just seems like it was
24 subsidizing, government subsidizing, you know, these
25 workers and they work at our senior centers, they

work at our CBO, but there is no future for them in terms of like because I heard complaints from some of the workers they don't have pension. So, they've been working there for years. It's like they're not going anywhere, and it's not really a full-time position either, right? Because in the Title Five they supposed to be training. And so a lot of seniors, especially low income senior, cannot support themselves based on what they receive in this program. So they actually really need a real job. So, I guess it's like well always, how do we help really market the skills you were talking about earlier, you know, the language capacity, the experience, you know I mean, years of working. I mean, if they work let's say at a hospital setting or health clinic setting, they can be more comforting to young children and to seniors. I mean, they have that skill that people don't know. I mean, I see it in my office. I mean, my senior workers a lot of time can calm situation down when people come in and agitated and they're able to, you know, calm them down and be able to provide service to them. So, we really need to work at marketing these skills that can really be helpful to employers and help them find some really

1 good paying jobs, right? So, we with the Workforce
2 One, with the Seal training--and have the
3 Administration thought about supplementing some of
4 the funding from the cuts? I mean, that's a big
5 chunk of cuts, right, more than five million dollars?
6 So, have the Administration thought about putting
7 some money into this program to help with the job
8 training and helping older worker get placement in
9 job, or is DFTA advocating for--

11 CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] I think the
12 thinking is that it's a--

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing]
14 resources?

15 CARYN RESNICK: Federal program and that
16 we were not going to recreate it locally when
17 Workforce One is really the employment program for
18 the city. You know, there are other ways in which
19 there is training that happens out in the community,
20 so, in our senior centers, in the libraries. AARP
21 I'm sure is going to testify shortly, you know has a
22 huge employment training program for older workers.
23 So, together, public, private, government, and not
24 for profits out there, there's a lot of work going on
25 in terms of teaching computer skills, help with

resume writing and job fairs and trying to promote older workers. So, I think we see it as a united effort.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But if their, the federal dollars are being cut, let's say in the Title Five program, is Workforce One going to be able to-- is Workforce One programs getting extra resources to pick up the slack?

JACQUELINE MALLON: No. But to answer your question, I mean, I might--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] In different--

JACQUELINE MALLON: [interposing] The other thing that's happening with the career pathways approach, there is a lot of discussion and looking at all the various workforce programs to see, you know, if money should be reallocated. It's just too early in the process to know, you know, how that's going to turn out.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, definitely we will advocate together with DFTA that Workforce One, I mean, the city's job training program, job placement program needs to put a stronger emphasis on really helping the older worker population that's

sort of is not on the radar. I mean, like, DFTA has been doing it, but if the funding has been cut from the Federal government, then we got to find some other ways. I mean, people are living longer. So, anybody from 55 to 64, that's considered young. So even we try to say they're older worker, they're not really that old. We're talking about people who need to work in their 70's because they don't have enough money from their retirement or whatever, and to make sure, you know, at age 55 if they can continue to work, maybe they could have some pensions and enough income so that later on they don't have to work in their 70's. So, we got to really do those preparation program now to prevent a bigger issue later on. So, yeah, we just got to put it back on the Administration's radar that this is also an issue, not just taking care of our seniors at the senior center, which is great, and you know, all the other programs, but we have young active seniors that needs to work, that needs to make a living to support themselves. So we really need to work together to develop these programs. Council Member Deutsch, do you have any--oh, we're joined by Council Member Rose

and Council Member Treyger. Council Member Deutsch, you got a question?

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, Chair. First of all, Commissioner, thank you very much for all the work you do in my district. I appreciate everything you do, and also I just want to say that throughout the year I have like a job placement in my office where people that are looking for jobs, they--I encourage them to bring their resumes into my office, and I work with local organizations that have job placements, and I forward those resumes to these organizations that in interim they try to match up the jobs. We've been very successful with it. I would like to see the same thing if we can do with senior citizens and broaden the scope. I may be having a central location email address where people, elected officials or residents that if they know of a job opportunity, it will be a central location or a number, phone number, or email address that they could send in what job opportunity it is, what it entails, and in the same time if we have a senior that is looking for a job, we could send it to the same place and maybe we could make up the match. So, we could broaden our scope by doing

it in all 51 districts so this way it's not limited to one district. I'm just finding, because sometimes one district you might have not that many job opportunities available, but if you brought in sometimes a district in the Bronx could help someone in Brooklyn. And while I see many seniors that are looking for work, looking to work, I also see some seniors that like to relax. So, that's why this coming Sunday I'm having a drive-in movie for seniors, for adults, our older adults in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. We will be featuring the movie. It's going to be in Manhattan Beach from 5:30 till about 8:30. It's Grease. So, anyone that is interested you're welcome to come into my district in Manhattan Beach. Doors open at 5:30. If you drive in with your car you'll have a speaker, a very large screen, senior-friendly. Even for our young adults, I sometimes, many times I feel I need glasses and I don't wear them, but it's senior-friendly. There we go. Thank you, colleague, always there to save me. And so everyone's welcome. Everyone's welcome to come in Manhattan Beach this Sunday evening at 5:30 to watch the movie Grease. So, anyway--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] Will there be popcorn?

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: There will be popcorn, yes. There'll be popcorn.

CARYN RESNICK: I'm there.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: And we're trying to bring back going back to the future. So, if anyone has roller skates and a mini-dress or mini-skirts, you're welcome to come and serve the popcorn. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Gosh, Council Member Deutsch, your district is always so fun. I know we have a lot of seniors in his district and we go on trips to Governor's Island, and now you have outdoor movies, too. Other Council Members have any questions? Okay. I just want to go back and ask about the Reservist Program. How long--what's the time frame that they work in that program? Is there like a limit? Do you know how many months--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] I think the placements are supposed to be six months.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And what's the average pay that they get?

CARYN RESNICK: Ten dollars an hour?

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, it's--

CARYN RESNICK: Up to 15 hours a week at
10 dollars an hour.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, it's not really
like a--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] It's not a
full time employment.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: It's not a full time
employment. In some ways it's kind of like on the
job training in a way. So, it's not a--okay.
Council Member Vallone?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Is there any--
before we wrap up. Are there any incentives for our
senior owners, business owners or senior employers
that are hiring seniors for loans, grants, incentive-
based programs similar to our WMBE's or any talk of
possibly expanding that to include for our senior
businesses or businesses that employ seniors?

CARYN RESNICK: Not that I'm aware of.
No.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: See, we have a
new project.

CARYN RESNICK: It's a good idea.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I like that. I think that would be another way to kick-start a new look and a partnership with SBS, too. I think that would be a good next project maybe for next year going forward to incentivize and create some loans and grant opportunities or for employers that will take on a percentage of seniors to receive something, because I think that would help spur that gap. It's a thought.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I think that we should look at, I mean, programs that we try to develop for our youth, resource we try to look at, you know, creating incentive programs for senior training, on the job training that could lead to whether it's permanent, you know, employment or at least that could supplement their retirement income. My other question is about the language, the language skill issue. So, for a lot of the, you know, immigrant seniors that is a big, you know, barrier to employment. And so when they come into these training programs the time is so short, right? So are there any thinking about working together maybe with CUNY to really get some intensive language skill training, especially for some of the seniors who are

1 younger, you know, from 55 to 64 where they can
2 actually spend more time in terms of really
3 developing their English language skills and that
4 could really help them in terms of gaining
5 employment? I mean, they're proficient in their first
6 language, which definitely could help them get jobs
7 because there's such, you know, great needs for
8 translations and interpretation, you know,
9 interpreters. So, but they need to like upgrade
10 their English skills as quickly as possible. So, are
11 they like thinking about working with CUNY's or other
12 institution?
13

14 KIM HERNANDEZ: Well, we actually do work
15 with our community partners around ESL classes, and
16 that's part of our training when someone comes to,
17 once they're assessed through our training center.
18 So, we can make that and we do make that connection
19 for them while they're actually in our program. So,
20 that becomes, for that individual, part of their
21 model in terms of ESL classes so that they can
22 improve their language skills. So, that's really
23 cognizant on our minds. So, we do that.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, before I turn it
25 over to Council Member Rose, Ms. Mallon, if the

1
2 Workforce One could give us some breakdown statistics
3 in terms of number of older workers that do come in,
4 you know, for jobs or for skill training and then in
5 terms of percentage that do get job placements or?
6 That would be helpful. Council Member Rose?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. I was
8 just wondering, would you happen to have the
9 unemployment rate for seniors on Staten Island, DFTA?

10 KIM HERNANDEZ: We don't have it by
11 borough.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. And could
13 you tell me when you offer computer training,
14 technology training does that include like full
15 Microsoft Office training and social media?

16 KIM HERNANDEZ: Yes, it does. We
17 actually, our training is on average for 12 weeks for
18 participants. It can be longer for people who need
19 more training. This is a combination of computer
20 training, the customer service, resume writing, and
21 online looking for employment, but I just recently
22 had an opportunity this summer, because I always give
23 myself summer projects to do, is sit on our--in our
24 sixth floor training room in one of--actually, two of
25 the classes, the computer training classes, and this

particular set of classes was part of a four week--a four class series, and so I was coming in on the second class, and they were actually going through with a group of trainees the Microsoft system, actually, the nuts and bolts of computers. So, you know, we have people at totally all different levels, and so the classes are structured for people at various levels. So, there's some people who have never used a mouse, have great customer service skills by phone, but haven't used a mouse, haven't used computer technology, and then we have other people who, which I think is primarily, they need a refresher. So they've used older systems. Some of you may have been familiar with like Lotus 123 and older systems. They've used that but they haven't used Excel. So, the training becomes very central to their particular need, and the unique thing about one of our trainers is that he was at one time a Title Five participant in our program, and so he knows, you know, what it takes in order, you know, to learn the skills, but the classes are absolutely wonderful for the seniors who are participating. It meets them at every level that they are at, and they also are encouraged to work independently, you know, at our

training center and get guidance from our training centers.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So they have relevant skills that would carry them, and they could work in anyone's office.

KIM HERNANDEZ: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Great, great. And the trainings are throughout New York City?

KIM HERNANDEZ: The training is--so, we have our training center at Two Lafayette, and so that's where the core of the training occurs for 12 weeks, but we do have community sites. Those are the approximately 400 sites that we had talked about before, and those are also subsidized training sites for our Title Fives. So they're constantly--so they're assigned there and they're able to build their skills, whether it's reception, computer, their customer service skills. So, that's part of the arrangements that we have with these sites, because they are assigned to a supervisor, and that supervisor is supposed to give them that time to build their skills so that we can essentially get them job-ready.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But there's just one central training site?

KIM HERNANDEZ: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. Is financial advisement a compa--is there a financial advisement component in the Senior Community Service Employment Program? Because many of our seniors are living on retirement funds and some are having challenges, so is there a financial sort of education component, and if not, do you think there should be?

KIM HERNANDEZ: I think that definitely there should be. These are things that we have been talking about, but what I can tell you, and we would like to implement that, because that's another piece of the training. Once you have work, how do you budget, right? How are you able to maintain the income that you're making? But all of our participants, as part of the screening process, they receive a full benefits screening. So, if they need SNAP, if they need other benefits, we have a counselor that that's there who works directly with them for that particular piece, but we would like to bring that other part in.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yeah, incorporate it in the overall training, I think that would be beneficial. And another really important issue is elder abuse. Is that discussed in the training, overall training?

KIM HERNANDEZ: So, each person that is part of our program has someone that, a coordinator that they're working with individually. So, they do get that one on one direct service. So, if there is a personal, an issue like that, which is very serious, they would--they can speak to their coordinator immediately, and then we'll connect them with our DFTA service, which in this case is right in the building, our Elder Abuse Program, and other programs that they may be interested that we can provide assistance with. And just another thing, I know you didn't ask this question, but we were--we also see a number of people who are homeless, and last year we helped 120 participants who were homeless or on the verge of potentially being homeless through our Title Five program.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I think maybe helping them identify what maybe financial, you know, abuse looks like, especially since they're working,

1 and letting them know that there are resources if in
2 fact they are, you know, experiencing any kind of,
3 you know, elder abuse, especially financial abuse.
4 And my last question is really have you been able to
5 fare it out if there is and what level of
6 discrimination there might be against seniors who are
7 submitting online applications and are sort of
8 rejected out of turn? Because my concern is that
9 often times just like young people they might be
10 shunted into low-wage, you know, earning sector. Is
11 there some way that you're--have you captured--

12 CARYN RESNICK: I don't think there's any
13 way to quantify that, but we certainly know and we've
14 talked about earlier that we know that ageism exists,
15 and part of our job is encouraging employers to hire
16 older workers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But there's no way
18 to sort of capture those numbers?

19 CARYN RESNICK: No.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: No? Okay. Thank
21 you. Thank you for your--

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Caryn, in your
23 testimony you were talking, the statistic that you
24 were quoting for Fiscal 15, there's 495 individuals,
25

and you say 57 percent of them was between 55 to 64. So, does that mean 40 something percent are older than 64?

CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: What's the oldest age that people have come in for this Title Five training?

CARYN RESNICK: I don't know what our oldest client has been.

KIM HERNANDEZ: I don't have that.

CARYN RESNICK: But we definitely have people in their 70's and above. We skew older, I think.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, do you keep statistic in terms of the, you know, the job placement--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] Absolutely, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: percentage? So, if you can share some of that with us in terms of like senior, I mean, older adults that are above 64, like how are they able to get jobs, and also what is the average stay in this training program? I mean, now that the feds has put a cap on 48 months, I mean, how

long do people do stay in this training program? If you can get us that statistic.

CARYN RESNICK: We have--yeah, I think we have all that data.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Treyger?

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Chair, I appreciate it. You know, I think this is a very important topic and I commend both the Chair and my colleagues for holding this important hearing. Very often we hear about what, you know, as seniors, you know, older adults age what they can't do, but I think we need to shift the conversation to what they could do and do very well, better than others, actually. And this reminds me of when I was a high school teacher and I was teaching about World War II, and I said, you know, "What could be more impactful than a textbook, but to go to my local VA hospital and invite a World War II veteran Purple Heart recipient to come speak to my class?" And I could tell you that his words to my classroom were more powerful than any lesson, any image or any video clip I showed my class, and to this day they still ask about him, and I see them, you know. So, one of the

things that happened as a result of that is working with local state officials in my community. They formed a Speaker's Bureau in the State Veteran's Affairs Office. They actually have a program now where veterans are invited to speak to classrooms. I'd suggest that we explore that if not already with our city agencies where many of our seniors has very powerful stories to share, particularly in my districts they come from different parts of the world. They come with their experiences. They came--they've worked all their lives. They've raised their families. They've seen potentially conflict. They came here for some reason, for a better life, and those seniors who lived in this country went through so much here as well. Let's explore the possibility of having something similar at the local level where we can invite seniors to come speak to classrooms and share their stories, because that's something that they--and that is old tradition, by the way. That's new phenomena. If you look at history throughout the world, seniors passing on knowledge and stories that is a part of a world--that's part of our world's culture. So, does something like that

exist today, and what's the--what are your thoughts on creating those opportunities moving forward?

KIM HERNANDEZ: I don't know of a formal program like that. I know anecdotally that things like that happen in the school system. It's a wonderful idea.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. And--yeah? I think that--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] Sorry, we have an intergenerational program at DFTA. So we do have older adults--well, children that go into nursing homes and other places and vice versa, bringing older adults into schools to help--

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [interposing] Because if--

CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] mentor children.

CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And I think that maybe there could be some examination of like our school's curriculum and where our seniors have lived through what we're teaching kids from textbooks and teaching from curriculum, and to bring a personal live face and story to the pages that they're reading. I think that is more powerful and that will

1 stay in their minds much longer than any lesson plan,
2 and I think that maybe working with this committee,
3 my colleagues, I think we should explore that
4 possibility, because I--seniors, once engaged, love
5 to share, love to speak about their lives. This I
6 know personally, and I love to learn from them, and I
7 think that our kids would have so much to learn from
8 them. So, let's utilize the human capacity that we
9 have and the capital and their history and their
10 knowledge and their experiences, and bring them into
11 the classroom and make a difference in our schools,
12 and I'd like to work with you maybe about that. Thank
13 you.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you for your
16 suggestion, Council Member Treyger. We could work
17 with the Education Committee on that. But relating
18 back to job training, I think the example that you
19 gave about a Title Five past participant came back
20 and now is teaching, you know, one of the training
21 class. I think that's really to look at the, you
22 know, the success stories that you had in the past.
23 It really got some of these people to come back and
24 help do the outreach to get the word out about senior
25 employment training that are available so that people

1
2 can really have an opportunity to access this program
3 and help them improve their lives. So, I think we
4 need to work at really getting these program out
5 there to the community of people know that they can
6 go to Workforce One and get some skill training or go
7 to DFTA, because 500 people a year, that's a very,
8 very small number. There's so many more people who
9 need this help and don't know about it, so we need to
10 get the word out, and I know that we need to advocate
11 for more funding. We'll put that on our list, right,
12 so that we can help--

13 CARYN RESNICK: [interposing] Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: more than 495 people.
15 But thank you for coming in today and we look forward
16 to working with you on this.

17 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We're going to call up
19 our next panel, Chris Widelo from AARP and Michele
20 D'Amato from SAGE. If anyone else that wants to
21 testify, please fill out a form with the Sergeant.
22 Thank you. You can begin. Please identify yourself.

23 MICHELE D'AMATO: Good morning. Good
24 morning, Chairwoman Chin and distinguished members of
25 the Committee. My name is Michele D'Amato. I am the

Program Manager of the SAGE Works Program at SAGE, which stands for Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders. SAGE is a national organization that offers supportive services and consumer resources for LGBT older adults and their caregivers, advocates for public policy changes to address the needs of LGBT older people and provides training for aging providers and LGBT organizations largely through its National Resource Center on LGBT Aging. Thank you for holding this hearing to address older adult employment issues. My colleagues have testified about the difficult landscape for older workers in general. I'd like to add some comments about the additional barriers faced by LGBT older adults. For LGBT older workers, these barriers are coupled with LGBT discrimination in the workplace, lack of traditional family support. LGBT older adults who are un or underemployed are at particular risk for increased poverty, adverse health outcomes, and social isolation. They are more likely to stay longer in the workforce than heterosexual people. The skills needed to remain in or re-enter the workforce change frequently. LGBT older adults who wish to remain in or re-enter the workforce often

require more training. SAGE Works offers them the training assistance they need to prepare themselves to seek gainful employment. SAGE Works is a national employment support program for LGBT people age 40 and older that expands participant's job seeking skills and career options and connects employers to diverse high caliber candidates. SAGE Works provides cutting age training workshops and personal coaching at various sites nationwide. The SAGE Works program helps participants increase technology and job search skills in order to remain competitive in the modern workplace, gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of job search strategies and employment resources and receive job placement assistance that eventually helps to improve their financial security. Beyond facing the formidable challenges of discrimination based on age, sexual orientation and/or gender identity our SAGE Works participants are often burdened with the additional challenge of long term unemployment and limited financial resources. Their circumstances can be dire and studies show they often have no family support. SAGE Works participants are primarily the long term unemployed, unemployed for six months or longer. So, the design of the program

reflects the specific challenges faced by the long term unemployed by requiring a more rigorous and comprehensive approach to workforce readiness. This is why we offer a cohort based two week employment boot camp. The employment boot camp includes session on stress and anger management as well as the realities of today's job market. Another key element of the program is to continue to nurture current relationships and cultivate new ones with age and LGBT-friendly organizations, companies, academic institutions, and nonprofits throughout New York City. As the manager of this program I have seen how job security has an incredible stabilizing effect on the lives of our participants who find employment. Employment offers not only economic security, but their new roles in the workplace helps SAGE Works participants feel more confident, more empowered, and positively affects their physical and mental well-being. Perhaps the best way to understand SAGE Works' impact is to hear from a SAGE Works participant how the program not only helped them find employment but also connects them to community and the support they need to handle the numerous challenges that can come up with unemployment. This

quote is from Howard who is 65 years old. "SAGE boot camp taught me how to write more effective cover letters. I learned about using new social media platforms in my job search. I especially appreciated advice on how to make a career change as an older person. Most of all, boot camp reignited my hope of finding a job when I largely had given up." I just also want to mention, it's not in my testimony, but just a couple of statistics, especially after your comments, Chairwoman Chin, about the young old, and that is who we are primarily serving in our program. So, between the ages of 50 and 59 it's about 41 percent of our SAGE Works participants, and between the ages of 60 and 69 is about 31 percent. I also want to mention the CSEP program. we partnered with AARP Foundation and we are a certified site of the Work Search computer-based assessment tool, and we also are a host agency, and four of our SAGE Works participants who we've referred to the CSEP program are now currently full time employees of SAGE, and those jobs are a facilities manager, food service coordinator, and we have two receptionists that have come now from the CSEP program in transition to full time employment, which we're very proud of. So, in

1 closing, I want to thank this committee and the City
2 Council for taking the time to explore this very
3 important issue which directly impacts the quality of
4 life for all New Yorkers, and I'd be happy to answer
5 any questions you may have.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much.

8 Chris?

9 CHRIS WIDEL0: Good morning, Chairwoman
10 Chin. My name is Chris Widelo and I'm the Associate
11 State Director for New York City, and today I'm
12 joined by Janice Handler who is an AARP volunteer and
13 very soon will probably be giving testimony on her
14 own, so this is a little bit of a trial run for her,
15 and I'm also joined by a number of AARP volunteers
16 today. I think many of you know that AARP's a
17 membership organization and we represent Americans 50
18 and older. We have two and a half million members
19 here in New York State and about 750,000 in the five
20 boroughs of New York City, and I'm pleased to be here
21 to discuss some of the results of recent research
22 AARP has conducted on the topic of older workers, and
23 also thank you to Council Member Vallone for being
24 here as well. In a recent study by the society for
25 Human Resource Management nearly four in ten human

resource professionals predicted the loss of talent resulting from retirement or departures of workers 55 and older, that it would be either a problem or a crisis for their organization over the next 11 to 20 years. As a greater portion of the population approach and enter retirement age, there is a need to evaluate and take action in how New York and New York City can engage and retain this vital section of the workforce. This year, AARP in two different instances investigated the case of--the business case for the 50-plus worker and older and found out that attracting, engaging and retaining older workers makes good business sense. This was a update to a report that we had produced I think back in 2008, and it really made an even more stronger case for retaining and attracting older workers. The 50-plus segment of the workforce continues to be the most engaged, and increased engagement translates to revenue growth. An increase in engagement has been shown to help businesses increase their revenue growth, and that can result in millions of dollars for those businesses, you know, especially larger businesses that employ lots of employees. Other strengths include their experience, knowledge, quick

1 decision making, and in a recent study, researchers
2 did not find a decrease but an increase in
3 productivity and individual workers as they age, and
4 that's simply due to the minimal number of severe
5 errors made on the job. Not only can workers 50 and
6 older increase revenue, they also do not
7 significantly cost more than younger workers. The
8 shift to performance based compensation, the decline
9 of traditional defined benefit programs and the slow
10 rise in healthcare cost compared to younger workers
11 have significantly weakened the relationship between
12 age and labor cost making the cost of retaining and
13 recruiting more 50 and older workers minimal or non-
14 existent, and it far outweighed--it's far outweighed
15 by the value that these workers add. One of three
16 workers age 45 and older expect to retire at the age
17 of 66, and that's their hope, right? Compared to
18 just over one in five ten years ago. And in a
19 separate study, more than one-third, 37 percent of
20 all the workers said that they anticipate working for
21 pay post-retirement from their current career with
22 over half expecting to work for someone else. Older
23 workers expect to be here for some time, and they're
24 driven by strong personal reasons including career
25

aspirations and career opportunities. So, what are some of the solutions to address this need? The need and the benefits of attracting, engaging and retaining older workers is clear in our minds, and in recent survey we found that older workers already have a few ideas about how large employers can do just that. When asked about their dream job, many respondents talked about a profession. Almost half, 44 percent, of those who will seek post-retirement work will be looking to work in new fields of interest while another 23 percent intended to stay in the same field. Jobs in the sports, creative, hospitality, and education fields were indicated as popular fields of interest. Training was identified as the key need, especially among those planning to enter a new field. When asked what they enjoyed most about their career older worker's top mentions included income, benefits and the schedule of work/life balance. Regardless of the field, almost three out of four or 73 percent of the respondents hoped to work part time. Some respondents looked for a particular type of work, life--working lifestyle. They identified flexible work arrangements, travel opportunities, charitable aspects of the work, pay,

and benefits to be elements of their dream job.

Employers that are able to present rewards and flexibility that meet the needs of the 50-plus workers will increase their ability to both recruit and retain this valuable segment of the workforce.

Half of the respondents reported personal contacts as the primary avenue to find post-retirement work. Job

listings and professional networking were also

popular ways to find employment. Large employers who want to tap into the pool of 50-plus talent only

stand to benefit from responding to the voiced

desires of that older workforce. Interviews

conducted with a select group of leading employers

revealed three key strategies for recruiting and

retaining age 50 and older workers, creating flexible

workplaces, focusing on options for transition to

retirement and fostering generational diversity and

inclusion. Our study found that these strategies are

effective and worthwhile for many large employer's

entire workforce and that best practices can be

replicated by employers of all sizes across all

industries. So, I want to thank you for the

opportunity to speak today. You know, we believe at

AARP that New York City possesses a valuable pool of

talent and resources that remains to be fully tapped into and utilized. All the workers are present and willing if they are given the right conditions to be engaged and productive. AARP believes that employers large and small could introduce arrangements that will benefit the employer, employee and the city itself, and I brought along copies of the research. One of them, the business case for the 50-plus worker, this is the executive summary. I wanted to spare you a hundred page report and 20 copies of those, so it's available online, but I'd be certainly happy to send along the full version if it's of interest. Eric, I'll send it to you and you can disseminate if you'd like and take a look at it, but I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Madam Chair, just real quick. Thank you Chris and Michele for the data, and I see we're all united. I know you were here during my concerns with the Assistant Commissioner, and I was wondering if you had any thoughts on some of the ideas that the Chair and I were expressing about expanding beyond Title Five,

expanding beyond the median income limitations, providing incentive programs or grants or loans for senior-run businesses or businesses that employ a percentage of seniors, for senior accreditation programs, for banks, financial institutions. I think we are woefully not providing enough, and I look at other areas, whether it's WMBE programs or anything else that tries to incentivize. Our seniors need every possible penny from the budget. They need our help, and I think you as our advocates and eyes can greatly help increase pressure or come up with ideas. There's no doubting the value of hiring seniors, and that's most of your data here, but I'm looking for specific program ideas or ways to increase what's already there and make them better, not just resell the advantage of why we should hire a senior with all their experience. That's a given. I want to work with you to make those other ideas happen. Is there anything that you heard this morning or any other ideas out of the box that we can try to look at?

MICHELE D'AMATO: I love the idea of having an accreditation process. So, for example, I work closely with our Development Department and our Development Department is, you know, engages with

corporations, and those corporations have affinity groups, LGBT employee resource groups, and we work very closely with them, and you know, we are--we do have a senior center, the first LGBT senior center, and they want to do more than just, you know, come in as a group and serve dinner, you know, one night. They want to do more volunteer skills-based volunteering. So I've been able to engage them with the help of, you know, my relationship with our Development Department to have, you know, J.P. Morgan Chase come in and do workshops, and we're just developing a relationship with Amalgamated Bank. Black Rock, you know, their HRA people have come on and done resources, but the other great thing about developing those relationships, I realize that they're not specific programs, but at least it's a way in to start thinking about older workers is that I can refer some of our participants to those HR people now that I know them and they've come to our site and they've met our people who are, you know, highly educated. They are, you know, viable. They're ready to go. I mean, most cases they don't need job skills training. They are people that have years of experience. They just maybe are missing a few things

1
2 that they haven't done because they hadn't searched
3 for jobs in a long time like social media and, you
4 know, upgrading their resumes and how to network
5 themselves, and people in that particular age group,
6 which I am in, have a hard time marketing themselves.
7 So, those are the things that we're teaching them,
8 especially in the employment boot camps. This is
9 very, you know, intensive two-week everyday five days
10 a week as if they're coming to a job every day, and--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing] And
12 I think that's perfect. I think that's exactly--it
13 expands the boundaries of any socioeconomic
14 limitation someone may be in. That's every senior,
15 period.

16 MICHELE D'AMATO: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: And I think
18 everyone can benefit from any age, from 55 on for
19 that exact approach.

20 MICHELE D'AMATO: But the representative
21 from DFTA had talked about the NYAM's [sic] Age-
22 friendly New York awards.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I love that
24 program.
25

1
2 MICHELE D'AMATO: I do too, and in fact,
3 one of our employer partners, Renewal Care Partners,
4 won that award last year because he does hire a
5 number of our SAGE Works participants. So, if, you
6 know, if there was something more official to
7 designate those companies and even, you know,
8 nonprofit organizations as age-friendly employers, I
9 think that would be amazing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you.

11 CHRIS WIDELo: I think from AARP's
12 perspective the skills and job training aspect, you
13 know, as I mentioned a lot of folks realized that if
14 they're going to stay in the workforce they need to
15 adapt, or they want to. They want a new experience.
16 They've been doing their jobs for a number of years,
17 and I think anything that we can do to incentivize
18 employers to want to hire more older workers is a
19 smart move. It's not just--it's not just nice, it's
20 going to be very necessary, right? The last boomer
21 turned 50 in December of last year, and so over the
22 next 15 years you will have a lot of people
23 approaching that retirement age, you know, it'll be
24 creeping up a little bit higher, and if employers
25 don't become more nibble and figure out a way to

1 retain those workers or to bring workers back into
2 the workforce. They are going to be--there's going
3 to be severe shortage. They cannot do it. I know
4 government is one of the areas teaching. Those are
5 some of the areas that are going to be the most
6 affected because there will be such a large area of--
7 a large group of people retiring. I spoke to one
8 gentleman who works for an agency. He lives in
9 Connecticut, worked for an agency here in New York
10 City, a state agency, and said that the biggest
11 obstacle that they are facing now is so much of the
12 workforce is retired. The institutional knowledge is
13 gone, and they are really running into issues where,
14 you know, people then knew how to keep things moving
15 on time are just not there to provide that and they
16 can't teach it fast enough. So, I think any way that
17 now, starting now, you know, the next 11 to 20 years
18 is really the sweet spot, but they have to start now
19 to look at ways that they can adapt their business
20 model to accommodate what will be their reality, and
21 you know, bringing in older workers or looking at
22 unique opportunities to do job sharing. I think Home
23 Depot at one point had an interesting program for the
24 snowbirds, and so they had a lot of people working up
25

1 here in the northern states, and what they would do
2 is as those folks may have wanted to go Arizona or
3 different states where it was warmer because they had
4 that flexibility, they would link them up with a
5 store in that area to continue doing some work
6 because they didn't want to lose that person when
7 they came back. They wanted them to be connected--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [interposing]
9 Perfect example.

10 CHRIS WIDELo: because they needed that,
11 right? So, to the extent that--and we would love to
12 strategize with the Council, with you on this topic,
13 but I think it really starts with changing the
14 mindset of and looking at the reality of what the
15 next 10 years holds. It does not, though, however,
16 you know, excuse the fact that there are many, you
17 know, that older workers typically are unemployed a
18 lot longer than their younger counterparts, and that
19 in the short term is a big issue, right? And it's
20 hard to say just wait, just wait a few years, because
21 they need that now, and for an older person this is
22 the prime time for them to sock it away for
23 retirement savings. And so, you know, looking at the
24 issue of how we, you know. And I think to what was
25

1 just mentioned about getting those job skills up and
2 helping I think will go a long way to make them more
3 employable, and I don't mean that in a negative way,
4 but I think that that sometimes is what is needed,
5 you know, getting current with the skills and the
6 different types of ways to market yourself as an
7 older worker, not just a resume in the mail anymore,
8 right? It's LinkedIn and all these different online
9 ways and working your networking. I think networking
10 is such a key piece of that.

11
12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I think it's really--
14 Michele, it's really great to hear that the people,
15 the four people that was placed from the CSEP program
16 got hired.

17 MICHELE D'AMATO: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I think that's what we
19 want to see, but unfortunately that is really not the
20 case.

21 MICHELE D'AMATO: I know.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: The 500 or close to
23 500 people that are in that program now, most of them
24 will not be able to get a permanent job.

25 MICHELE D'AMATO: Uh-hm.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, I think we still need to look at in terms of government program how do we really help the low income senior who really needs the employment but don't have the skill or the language. We really need to be more creative in that way, and I hope that maybe AARP can also help us, you know, look at this segment of the population that might not have the skill and the language skill to really gain, you know, employment that can help them later on or supplement their retirement, because they're the one that did not have the opportunity of having a good paying job. So they are in the low-skill workforce. You know, they get low wages and they need more than just social security to survive. So, we really need to figure out how to create program that can help the low income, moderate income senior to be able to support themselves.

MICHELE D'AMATO: I agree, especially in the healthcare industry which is growing, but not necessarily home attendance, and I know that a lot of the people that come to our program are not interested in becoming home attendants, and I notice that it seems to be that that's what people or organizations want to put senior in, these home

1 attendant jobs, which are very physically intensive.
2 You know, if you have to lift someone or, you know,
3 transfer someone, and you know, people don't want
4 those jobs, and you know, it's just it's too
5 difficult physically for someone, you know, 60-plus
6 or 65-plus to become a home attendant. So, I agree
7 that the skills programs would be great if we had a
8 funder, who could fund like they fund youth programs,
9 to come in and just do a, you know, a year program of
10 how to work in the healthcare. A lot of our program
11 participants are career transitioners and they are
12 aware of the healthcare industry growing, and one of
13 the things that they are interested in transitioning
14 to is patient care advocate. So, someone to meet
15 someone in the hospital or go with them to
16 appointments or somehow to help them to navigate the
17 healthcare system, and I don't see any programs for
18 older adults or even the young old to break into
19 those types of careers.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, we would love to
22 work with you, and if you have any, you know, other
23 ideas, because even in the healthcare industry a lot
24 of times you see the people who are marketing the
25 health plan or doing the outreach--

MICHELE D'AMATO: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: a lot of them are, you know, young people because they have the language skill, but you can also hire an older worker with the same language skill and probably could do, you know, the same job or even better because of the experience that they have. So, I think we really have to open up some of these opportunities so that we can match the seniors up with these jobs. So, I look forward to working, you know, with you and then also in AARP to see how we can help all the seniors that need to work to sort of enrich themselves or to be able to support themselves.

JANICE HANDLER: You know, one thing that people--

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [interposing] Can you identify yourself?

JANICE HANDLER: Janice Handler, and I work with Chris. I'm a volunteer at AARP. One program I've seen be very successful in the law school community where I teach, I teach at Fordham Law School, is the subsidization--oh, you went to Fordham? Our people. The subsidization of jobs for students who have not been able to get them. As most

1 of you know, law school employment has been
2 declining. There's a real crisis trying to get jobs
3 for lawyers. So, the schools have walked into it and
4 simply subsidized these jobs for periods of time
5 making employers much more receptive to hiring our
6 students for a period of time. This is a program--
7 Council Member Vallone, you asked about specific
8 programs. This came to my mind as something that
9 might work for seniors, subsidizing employers for
10 maybe a six month period to hire them, see what kind
11 of a job they can do, and then they'll take off on
12 their own.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, we have to
15 figure out all kinds of programs. I mean, we've done
16 some for the youth, so we could also see how we can
17 use it for, you know, for our seniors. Thank you for
18 coming in today to testify and we're looking forward
19 to work with you on this issue.

20 MICHELE D'AMATO: Thank you.

21 CHRIS WIDELo: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And thank you to
23 everyone for coming. Have a wonderful day.

24 MICHELE D'AMATO: Same to you.
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COMMITTEE ON AGING

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [gavel] Hearing is
adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date October 9, 2015