

TESTIMONY BEFORE  
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

COMMITTEES ON YOUTH SERVICES  
& FINANCE

HEARING

ON

FISCAL YEAR 2010 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

PRESENTED BY  
JEANNE B. MULLGRAV, COMMISSIONER

NEW YORK CITY  
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009

Good afternoon, Chairmen Fidler, and Weprin and members of the Youth Services and Finance Committees. I am Jeanne B. Mullgrav, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget.

Since I testified in March, the City's fiscal conditions continue to deteriorate and needed assistance from Albany and labor unions has not materialized. We are pleased that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will help fund vital services, though more tough choices must be made.

Our Executive Budget for next year is \$305.3 million, of which: 59.6% is city tax levy, 28.7% federal dollars, 4% state and 7.7% are from other funds.

As you recall, as part of the November and January plans, DYCD was asked to find savings totaling \$5.3 million in Fiscal Year 2009 and \$21.2 million in Fiscal Year 2010 and the out-years. In the Executive Budget, DYCD provided additional savings of \$7.5 million.

Meeting this budget target was challenging, as DYCD incurred a series of cuts from major program areas supported by City-tax levy funding. Further cuts to these programs could potentially impact their effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

The Executive Budget proposes a reduction of the City tax-levy share of funding to the Summer Youth Employment Program by \$6.6 million. Given all the efficiencies achieved, like other agencies, we submitted headcount reductions, totaling \$1 million through attrition and lay-offs. It is a decision we do not take lightly because of the negative consequences to DYCD's dedicated workforce and their families. This will also place additional burdens on an efficient workforce, which in the past several years has seen its responsibilities grow substantially along with the agency.

#### Summer Youth Employment Program

On Saturday, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced the City's plan to use ARRA funding allocated through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Thank you Chairman Fidler for your on-going support of this initiative and for joining us that morning along with many other City, State and Federal elected officials.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) includes a mix of City, State and Federal funds to support a robust and comprehensive program for over 51,000 participants. Enhancements to the program this year include:

- Increased outreach to low-income and vulnerable youth. This includes youth who are homeless or runaway, in foster care, court-involved, high-school drop-outs, pregnant or parents.
- Increasing the upper age limit from 21 to 24 years old so that teens and young adults who especially need assistance can participate.

- Placing more youth in jobs in the private sector such as law firms and neighborhood small businesses.
- Launching “Give Back Fridays” to engage 1,000 young people in meaningful service projects across the City. This is part of the Mayor’s NYC Service initiative and projects include beautification of NYCHA and Parks facilities.

DYCD did extensive, cost free outreach so that all young people have an opportunity to participate. Some of these outreach efforts include:

- Working with other agencies such as the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Administration for Children’s Services and the State Office of Children and Family Services to enroll youth.
- Radio spots on Hot 97, KISS FM and 101.9 FM WRXP.
- Ads on agency vehicles and street outreach vans.
- Thousands of posters distributed throughout the City – including at community-based organizations, government offices, and storefronts.
- Electronic ticker-tape advertisement at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal.
- Council Members got the word out about SYEP. Thank you for opening your offices for youth to apply.

These efforts evidently paid off. So far, over 100,000 young people submitted an application, and 80% were received on-line. I am pleased to announce that, with your encouragement, we are extending the deadline to apply by one week to Friday, May 22, 2009.

#### American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Initiatives

Mayor Bloomberg also announced the investment of additional ARRA WIA funds to support these innovative programs:

- \$3 million to enhance the Out-of-School Youth Program (OSY) to provide 12-week paid internships to 1,064 disconnected youth who are not in school. OSY contractors provide a broad array of job-readiness services, case management, and employment and training assistance and the paid work experience is an enhancement to the current program. This additional funding will help facilitate the placement of participants in unsubsidized employment, advanced training, and/or education following their internships.
- \$5.5 million to create the “Go to School, Get a Job” Initiative. It is modeled after a successful program initiated in the 1970s, the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Project. It reduced school drop-out rates and helped close the racial disparity in employment. This initiative will add 741 additional slots to the In-School Youth Program providing a total of

2,800 paid school year internships to youth who remain in high school and meet academic and job performance standards.

- \$2 million to expand the Parks Opportunity Program (POP) Back to School and Work (BSW) Initiative through a partnership with the Parks Department. It will provide 200 public assistance recipients, 18 to 24 years old, who are not in school or working, with educational instruction, occupational training and supportive services while earning a paycheck. After completion of the program, youth will be helped to find jobs, enroll in college or advanced vocational training, and receive 12 months of follow-up services.

All four of these initiatives are in keeping with the spirit of ARRA - that funds be invested in programs that can have an immediate and long-term impact on the economy. They also are aligned with federal guidelines requiring the majority of funds be spent within the first year on programs that create employment opportunities for youth.

#### DYCD Programs in NYCHA Community Centers

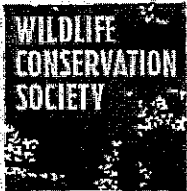
Now I would like to brief you on the status of Beacon Satellite Programs at New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Community Centers. The first phase was launched in February. Since then, I visited most of the 25 programs which are providing high-quality services to youth after school, in the evenings and on weekends. To date:

- Over 286 staff have been hired.
- 16% are former NYCHA employees.
- 1,017 elementary participants have enrolled.
- 966 middle and high school youth have enrolled.
- And, there are 923 adult participants.

We thank the Council for allocating funding for this initiative. The Executive budget includes \$12.25 million to continue this program next year. The current contracts with Beacon providers expire December 31, 2009.

To help design services starting in January 2010, DYCD underwent a comprehensive process to gain the input of young people, parents, resident leadership, and other stakeholders. Examples include:

- Meetings with the resident leadership of all 25 NYCHA developments.
- 18 focus groups across the City with parents of children.
- Four focus groups with high-school aged youth to identify their priorities.
- Over 2,000 youth surveys created by Market Street Research. The survey asks for feedback on current after school activities, barriers to participation, and programs that are the most and least appealing to youth.



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Testimony of Janet Torres  
Director of Government and Community Affairs  
Wildlife Conservation Society  
Before the New York City Committee on Economic Development and  
Committee on Finance  
May 14, 2009

Good Afternoon. My name is Janet Torres and I am Director of Government and Community Affairs for the Wildlife Conservation Society. Thank you Chairman White and Chairman Weprin, as well as the members of the Committee on Economic Development and Committee on Finance for the opportunity to speak before you today.

You may be wondering- why is the Wildlife Conservation Society testifying before the Committee on Economic Development? The Wildlife Conservation Society wants to share with you the importance of NYC's 34 Cultural Institutions Group (the CIG) and their economic impact on the city and local communities.

The CIG is 34 NYC cultural institutions that include botanical gardens, museums, performance arts centers, zoos and aquariums. They and the city are linked through formal partnership agreements which have guaranteed a measure of public investment to the institutions. In return, the cultural organizations have produced a diverse array of public services and amassed world-famous collections ranging from rare art and specimens to endangered plants and animals.

The Wildlife Conservation Society manages the following institutions in New York City - the **Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, and Queens Zoo, as well as the New York Aquarium in Brooklyn**. WCS today released economic impact numbers showing that it generates about **\$414.6 million** in economic activity in New York City for 2008, creating jobs, purchasing goods and pumping money into the cash registers of local businesses, many in underserved areas.

A break down of the \$414.6 million economic impact of WCS on NYC looks like this:

- \$285,800,000, due to operational expenditures
- \$76,200,000, due to capital expenditures
- \$52,560,000, due to expenditures by visitors.

The quantitative impact on NYC by WCS is impressive; add to that what can't be quantified and WCS is a great investment to the city. Much of WCS' impact upon our local area cannot be measured by these quantitative measures alone. WCS enhances and benefits the local community through its provision of education and teacher training, its entertainment and recreation facilities and its community outreach programs. These work to improve the quality of life and attractiveness of New York City to visitors and residents, particularly among under-served groups. WCS and all the city's cultural institutions are what make New York City great. For every dollar invested in WCS, alone, by the city, we raise another \$9 that helps bring all these services to the city.

Other WCS impact numbers include:

- More than 4 million visitors come to our facilities each year. The Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium are both located in underserved areas.
- WCS offers free Wednesday admission to all at the Bronx Zoo and free Friday afternoons at the NYAQ.
- We are the largest youth employer in the Bronx, hiring more than 800 teens each year; and we employ more than 1,000 seasonal workers, including students, retirees, and people on public assistance.
- The New York Aquarium welcomes more visitors each year than any other cultural institution in Brooklyn.
- WCS is the only cultural institution in four of New York's five boroughs.

WCS, a member of the city's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), is working with its fellow members in asking City Hall to fully restore their funding in FY 2010 as well as to support a job creation and retention program to keep our communities economically strong.

Thank you.

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During this process we have seen strong support for:

- An hour a day for homework.
- Academic enrichment activities.
- College preparation activities.
- Structured and fun recreational activities that help children stay fit and combat obesity.
- Computer and technology activities.
- Employment, work readiness services.
- Adult programming.

Last week, DYCD released the Cornerstone Initiative concept paper reflective of this feedback for public housing residents in all age categories: younger youth, ages 5 - 12, older youth 13 – 21, and adults. Programs will offer innovative and engaging approaches to help participants gain skills and attitudes they need to stay on track in school, graduate, be successful in work and life, and contribute to the well-being of peers, their families and communities. We anticipate releasing the RFP in early summer with new contracts to begin January 1, 2010.

#### Conclusion

Despite these tough times, we are as optimistic as ever that better times are ahead. In the meantime, DYCD will continue to move forward and be innovative in providing quality services to New York City's children and families most profoundly affected by this economy. In addition to some of the new initiatives I highlighted earlier, this year DYCD has and will be issuing at least nine RFPs as well as renewing contracts in a number of areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the DYCD Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget. I am joined by Bill Chong, Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services and John V. Cirolia, Assistant Commissioner for Contract Agency Finance. We are pleased to answer any questions you may have.

**THE COUNCIL  
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Name: Jeanne Mulligan, Commissioner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DYCD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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